

my LITTLE

pony

Legends
of Magic



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my LITTLE

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THIS IS AMAZING!
WHO KNOWS WHAT
COULD BE IN
HERE!

WELL, I AM CERTAIN
THAT LUNA AND I READ
SEVERAL OF THESE
STORIES WHEN WE WERE
UNDER STARSWIRL'S
TUTELAGE.

WHY
WOULD YOU
KEEP ALL OF
THIS LOCKED
AWAY?



WHEN STARSWIRL
DISAPPEARED, LUNA AND I
WERE CONVINCED HE WOULD BE
BACK ANY DAY. HE WAS OFTEN
PULLED AWAY ON ADVENTURES,
JUST TO TURN UP A FEW
WEEKS LATER.

AND WHEN
HE DIDN'T
RETURN?

AT FIRST, WE WERE
SURE HE WOULD. THEN, ONCE
A FEW MONTHS HAD PASSED,
WE STOPPED LOOKING. BUT WE
WERE STILL YOUNG, AND DIDN'T
DARE TO DISTURB OUR
TUTOR'S THINGS.



THEN THERE WAS
THE FIGHT, AND I EXILED
LUNA TO THE MOON. AFTER
THAT I WAS TOO BUSY... OR
PERHAPS IT HURT TOO
MUCH TO THINK OF
THOSE DAYS.

"LEGENDS
OF MAGIC"?

STARSWIRL
WAS FOND OF
MYTHS AND
LEGENDS. STORIES
OF PONIES WITH
EXCEPTIONAL
POWER.

*Legends
of Magic*

IT LOOKS LIKE
HE WROTE THESE
HIMSELF.



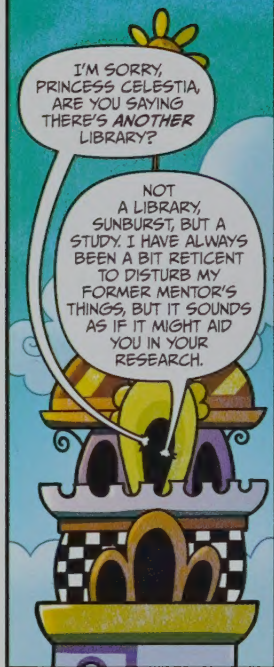
WHEN HE HEARD
A STORY OR A SONG
OF A LEGEND, HE WOULD
ALWAYS WRITE IT DOWN.
USUALLY THEY WERE
NOTHING MORE THAN
TALL TALES.

WHAT
ABOUT THIS
ONE?

WHAT IS IT
CALLED?

"THE GREAT
STARSWIRL THE
BEARDED, THE
TWO SISTERS, AND
THE MAGICAL
VORTEX."

THAT...
THAT'S ABOUT
ME!



I'M SORRY, PRINCESS CELESTIA, ARE YOU SAYING THERE'S ANOTHER LIBRARY?

NOT A LIBRARY, SUNBURST, BUT A STUDY. I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A BIT RETICENT TO DISTURB MY FORMER MENTOR'S THINGS, BUT IT SOUNDS AS IF IT MIGHT AID YOU IN YOUR RESEARCH.



WAIT! ARE YOU SAYING THAT THIS STUDY BELONGED TO...

STARSWIRL THE BEARDED.

YOUR RESEARCH INTO THE HISTORY OF EQUESTRIA... I KNOW STARSWIRL DID A GREAT DEAL OF RESEARCH INTO THIS HIMSELF, BUT THOSE BOOKS DO NOT SEEM TO BE IN THE LIBRARY.



ASSUMING WE CAN FIND THE CORRECT —

—WELL, THERE WE ARE.



—GASP—

"—teaching."

CELESTIA, NO TWO
PONIES HAVE EVER DONE
MORE TO CONVINCE ME
THAT AN INDIVIDUAL CAN BE
BOTH THAN YOU AND
YOUR SISTER.

STARSWIRL!
MAKE HER LET
ME OUT OF
HERE!

NOW, PRINCESS
KNAVE, RELEASE YOUR
SISTER FROM THAT
MAGICAL BUBBLE
AT ONCE.

STARSWIIIIIRRRRRLLL!

BUT YOU TOLD ME TO. THAT WAS THE TASK. I MAKE THE BUBBLE, AND SHE HAS TO POP IT.

I DID NOT
SAY TO MAKE IT
FLOAT AWAY.

IT'S MEANT
TO BE A SIMPLE
TRAINING EXERCISE,
NOT A CHANCE FOR
YOU TO MAKE YOUR
SISTER PANIC.

WELL, IT'S
NOT MY FAULT
SHE CAN'T
KEEP UP.



LATER THAT NIGHT.

FASCINATING!
THIS WAS WRITTEN
BY STARSWIRL, BUT
IT DOESN'T READ
LIKE A JOURNAL
HERE.

HE'S WRITTEN
AN ACCOUNT
OF HIS OWN
LEGEND.



"NOW, WITHOUT A
DOUBT, MANY AMONG YOU
WILL KNOW THE LEGENDS
OF STARSWIRL THE
BEARDED."

"ONE OF THE
GREAT HEROES OF
OUR TIME, STARSWIRL WAS
KNOWN FOR FACING DOWN
MAGICAL CREATURES AND
FORCES NO OTHER PONY
WOULD DARE."

SNORTE
HE CERTAINLY
WASN'T KNOWN
FOR HIS SMALL
EGO.



But perhaps the most challenging
role for Starswirl was not that of
mage, or wanderer, or hero. But the
most dangerous of all professions—

Indeed, Starswirl was one of the
great pony heroes. His feats will
be sung long after he has left us.



HALT, KNAVE!
GO NO FURTHER!





IT IS NOT YOUR JOB TO MONITOR OR COMMENT ON YOUR SISTER'S PROGRESS. I AM THE INSTRUCTOR HERE.

WELL, THAT MUST BE FRUSTRATING FOR YOU.



ARE YOU OKAY, PRINCESS LUNA?

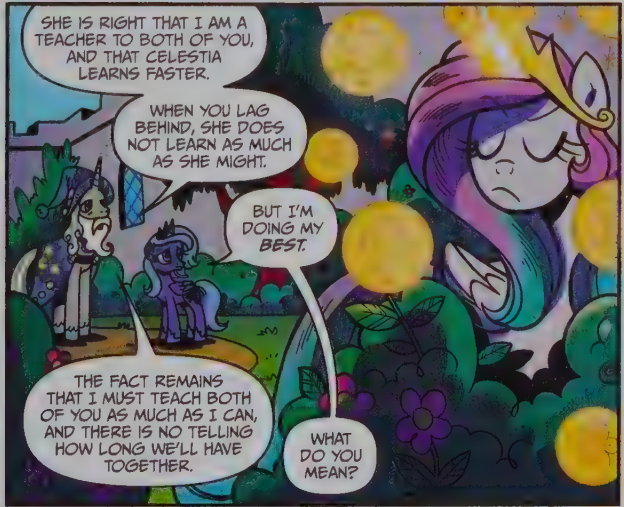
THANK YOU FOR GETTING ME DOWN. HOW CAN MY OWN SISTER BE SO MEAN? CAN YOU BELIEVE HER?

TO BE FRANK, HER COMPLAINT HAS MERIT.



I... I THOUGHT YOU WERE ON MY SIDE.

THERE ARE NO SIDES HERE, PRINCESS LUNA.



SHE IS RIGHT THAT I AM A TEACHER TO BOTH OF YOU, AND THAT CELESTIA LEARNS FASTER.

WHEN YOU LAG BEHIND, SHE DOES NOT LEARN AS MUCH AS SHE MIGHT.

BUT I'M DOING MY BEST.

THE FACT REMAINS THAT I MUST TEACH BOTH OF YOU AS MUCH AS I CAN, AND THERE IS NO TELLING HOW LONG WE'LL HAVE TOGETHER.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



WHEN A CRISIS ARISES, I MAY BE CALLED ON TO DEAL WITH IT, AND SOMEDAY I MIGHT NOT RETURN.

SOMETIMES OUR LIVES REQUIRE US TO DO THINGS THAT DO NOT SEEM IMMEDIATELY POSSIBLE TO US.



AS A PRINCESS, SOMEDAY THOSE THINGS MIGHT BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SURVIVAL OF YOUR KINGDOM OR THE FALL OF ALL OF EQUESTRIA.

IF YOUR BEST IS NOT UP TO THE TASK, EITHER YOU MUST FIND A NEW BEST, OR BE WILLING TO LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES.

LATER THAT NIGHT.



OKAY, GOT THE SPELLBOOK. NOW TO DO THIS WITHOUT WAKING EVERYONE UP.



FIND A NEW BEST. I HAVE TO FIND A NEW BEST.

I'LL MAKE THAT SNOBBY SISTER OF MINE EAT HER WORDS! THAT'S THE NEW BEST I WANT TO FIND.



OKAY, LUNA, YOU CAN DO THIS. IT'S JUST A MAGIC BUBBLE. IT'S NOT EVEN HARD.



OKAY, EASY ENOUGH. HERE GOES.

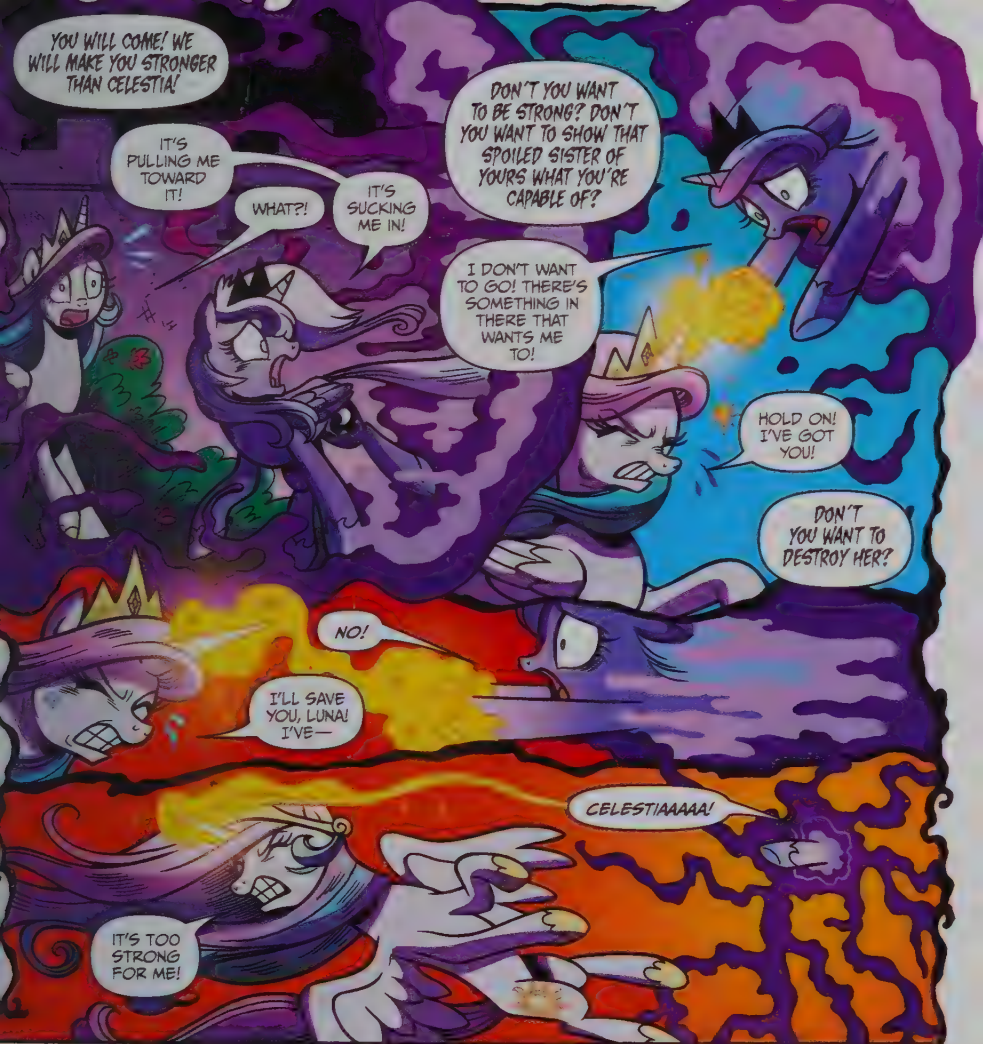


EEERRRG!

POPP!!

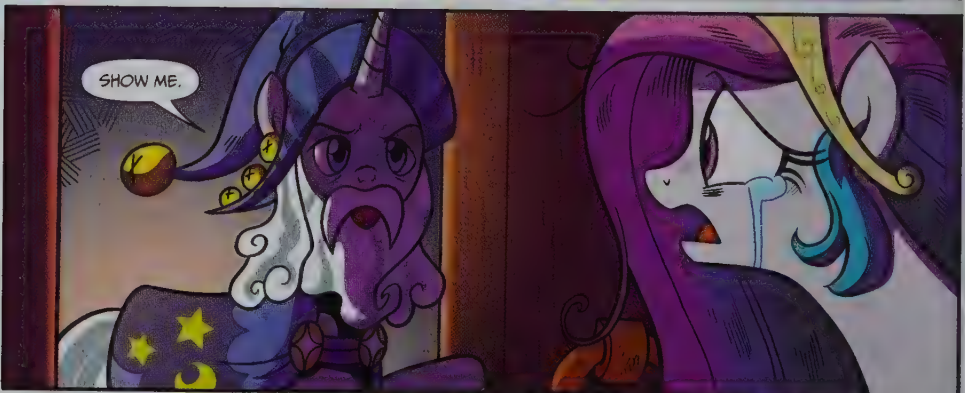


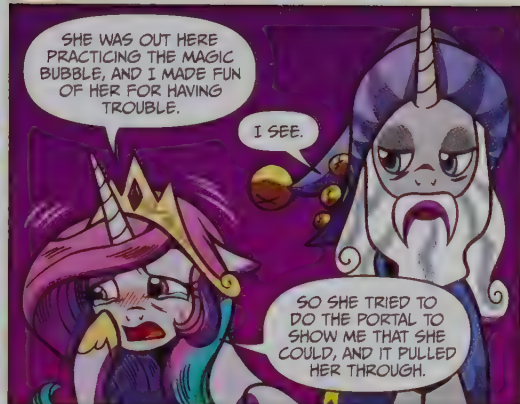


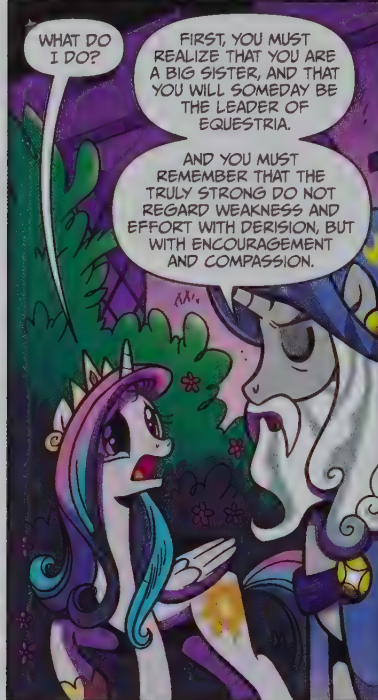




**KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK!**







WHAT DO I DO?

FIRST, YOU MUST REALIZE THAT YOU ARE A BIG SISTER, AND THAT YOU WILL SOMEDAY BE THE LEADER OF EQUESTRIA.

AND YOU MUST REMEMBER THAT THE TRULY STRONG DO NOT REGARD WEAKNESS AND EFFORT WITH DERISION, BUT WITH ENCOURAGEMENT AND COMPASSION.



YOUR SISTER IS LOST TO YOU TODAY BECAUSE YOU FAILED TO SHOW COMPASSION. BUT SHE IS ONLY PHYSICALLY LOST. THE PHYSICALLY LOST CAN BE PHYSICALLY RETRIEVED.

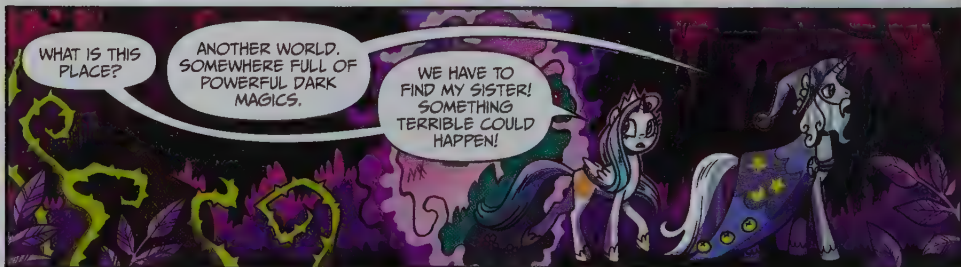
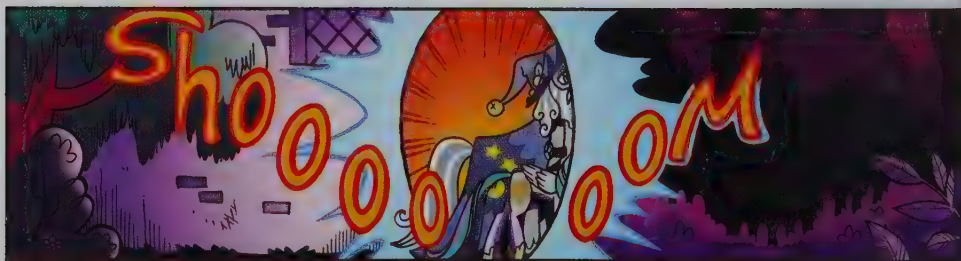
HOWEVER, IF YOU FAIL TO PROVIDE THE CARE NEEDED, YOU MAY LOSE YOUR SISTER EMOTIONALLY.

AND YOU MAY NEVER BE ABLE TO GET HER BACK.



BUT FOR THE MOMENT, WE MUST BE HER CHAMPIONS.

I AM READY.



WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

ANOTHER WORLD. SOMEWHERE FULL OF POWERFUL DARK MAGICS.

WE HAVE TO FIND MY SISTER! SOMETHING TERRIBLE COULD HAPPEN!





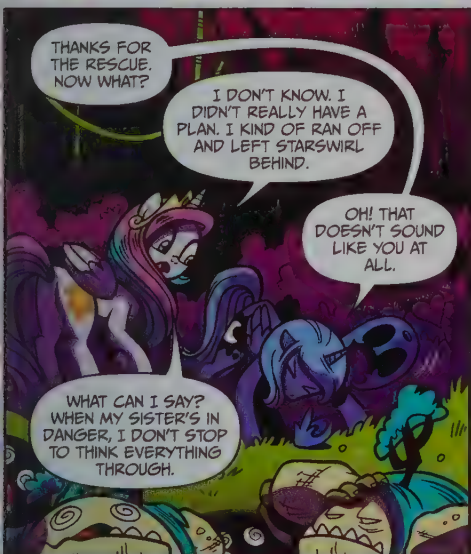


YOU CAME
FOR ME!

OF COURSE
I DID. YOU'RE MY
SISTER. NOW,
WATCH YOUR
HEAD!



FWIP!



THANKS FOR
THE RESCUE.
NOW WHAT?

I DON'T KNOW. I
DIDN'T REALLY HAVE A
PLAN. I KIND OF RAN OFF
AND LEFT STARSWIRL
BEHIND.

OH! THAT
DOESN'T SOUND
LIKE YOU AT
ALL.

WHAT CAN I SAY?
WHEN MY SISTER'S IN
DANGER, I DON'T STOP
TO THINK EVERYTHING
THROUGH.



WHAT DID
YOU SAY THEY
WANTED WITH
YOU?

THEY THINK
I'M SOMEBODY
ELSE. LIKE, I HAVE
SOME SORT OF
POWERFUL DARK
MAGIC.

WELL, IF THEY
THINK YOU'RE SO
POWERFUL,
THEY'LL LET YOU
GO, RIGHT?

DO NOT
ALLOW HER TO
LEAVE!



I... UH...
I DON'T THINK
THEY'RE GOING TO
LET ME LEAVE.

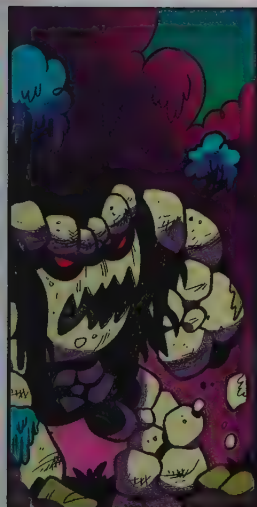
I GOT THE SAME
IMPRESSION.

GRAAAAGH!



AAAAHHHHHHH

GIRLS—



TIME TO
GO, LITTLE
SISTER!

BUT WHAT ABOUT
STARSWIRL!?



STARSWIRL
CAN TAKE CARE
OF HIMSELF.



YOU CAN'T LEAVE!
YOU ARE MEANT FOR
GREATNESS!

LEAVE ME
ALONE!



YOU WILL TURN
ON YOUR SISTER! YOU
WILL BE MIGHTY!

I WOULD
NEVER DO
THAT!

LUNA,
WE'RE ALMOST
THERE!





I HAVE TO GO BACK! I CAN'T LET STARSWIRL GET STUCK IN ANOTHER DIMENSION BECAUSE OF MY FOOLISHNESS.

LUNA, WAIT! IT WAS MY FOOLISHNESS THAT CAUSED THIS, NOT YOURS.

WHAT? HOW?



I'VE BEEN A BAD BIG SISTER. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN LOOKING OUT FOR YOU, NOT MAKING FUN OF YOU.

BUT YOU'RE RIGHT TO MAKE FUN OF ME. MY MAGIC IS WEAK. I'LL NEVER BE AS GOOD AS YOU.

NONSENSE!



YOU MADE A PORTAL TO A WHOLE OTHER WORLD. YOU'RE INCREDIBLE.

WE CAN WORK ON THE BUBBLE! YOU AND ME, TOGETHER. OKAY?

BUT I CAN'T EVEN MAKE A BUBBLE!

THAT SOUNDS GREAT. CAN I HAVE A HUG?

OF COURSE!



Naturally, that was the very moment I reemerged from the portal.

I had stunned the giant golem and left in rather a hurry.



I'm afraid I may have ruined the moment.

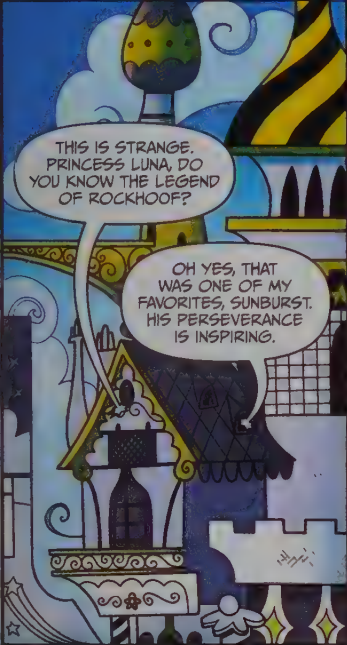


Art by Zachary Sterling



Art by Brenda Hickey





THIS IS STRANGE. PRINCESS LUNA, DO YOU KNOW THE LEGEND OF ROCKHOOF?

OH YES, THAT WAS ONE OF MY FAVORITES, SUNBURST. HIS PERSEVERANCE IS INSPIRING.



ROCKHOOF WAS A PONY SO MIGHTY THAT HE DUG A MOAT FOR A VOLCANO TO SAVE HIS CITY, ALL WITH ONLY THE USE OF HIS SHOVEL.

RIGHT, YES. THAT'S THE STORY I KNOW TOO.



WHY DO YOU ASK THIS, GOOD SUNBURST?

WELL, HE SAVES HIS TOWN, JOINS THE MIGHTY HELM, AND LIVES HAPPILY EVER AFTER, GUARDING THE TOWN.

INDEED, IT IS A MOST SATISFYING ENDING. A LESSON IS LEARNED. A HERO PROVES THEMSELVES. HARMONY IS RESTORED.



YEAH, WELL, THIS IS ONE OF STARSWIRL'S BOOKS FROM HIS PRIVATE LIBRARY. AND THAT'S NOT WHAT STARSWIRL HAS WRITTEN HERE AT ALL.

NO?

THIS STORY SEEMS TO BEGIN AFTER HE JOINED THE HELM.



DO YOU MEAN THAT STARSWIRL THE BEARDED WROTE A SEQUEL TO MY FAVORITE MYTH?

IT... WOULD SEEM SO.

IN THAT CASE—



—WE
COMMAND
YOU TO READ
THIS MYTH AT
ONCE!



WE?
COMMAND?
HUH?

THAT IS TO SAY, I
WOULD VERY MUCH
APPRECIATE IT IF YOU
SHARED THIS MYTH
WITH ME NOW.

OH!
ABSOLUTELY,
PRINCESS LUNA. JUST
LET ME FIND MY
PLACE HERE...



"MIGHTY ROCKHOOF
HAD DONE THE IMPOSSIBLE
AND SAVED HIS TOWN WHEN THE
MIGHTY HELM COULD NOT. BUT
THAT WAS NOT THE END."

SQUEE!

PRINCESS
LUNA?

AHEM. I MEAN
TO SAY... CARRY
ON, SUNBURST.



"AND THOUGH ROCKHOOF HAD ONCE BEEN
LAUGHED OUT OF HIS TRIAL FOR THE MIGHTY
HELM, THE SWORN PROTECTORS OF HIS
LAND, ON THAT DAY HE WAS THEIR HERO."

"THE MIGHTY HELM CARRIED ROCKHOOF THROUGHOUT THE TOWN ON THEIR SHOULDERS.

"AND EVERYWHERE HE WAS CARRIED, THE PONIES STREAMED FROM THEIR HOUSES TO COME AND SEE THE PONY WHO HAD SAVED THEIR CITY FROM A VOLCANO WITH NOTHING BUT A SHOVEL.



"HE WAS TAKEN BEFORE THE CAPTAIN OF THE MIGHTY HELM, STEELA ORESDDOTTER, TO RECEIVE A REWARD.

"BUT WHEN OFFERED MEDALS, JEWELS, EVEN THE KEY TO THE CITY, ROCKHOOF REFUSED.



"THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING HE WANTED."

NAME IT AND IT SHALL BE YOURS.

THEN SO YOU SHALL BE! PONIES, FETCH US A HELMET AND SWORD FOR THE BRAVE SOLDIER!

CAP'N! I WISH ONLY TO BE A GUARDSMAN OF THE MIGHTY HELM.



ROCKHOOF, BATTLER OF LAVA AND OPPONENT OF MOUNTAINS, AS CAPTAIN OF THE MIGHTY HELM, I, STEELA ORESDDOTTER APPOINT YOU AS THE NEWEST GUARD OF THE MIGHTY HELM.

DO YOU SWEAR TO UPHOLD THE LAWS OF THESE LANDS AND PROTECT THESE PONIES WITH YOUR LIFE?



SO SAYS I.

THEN WEAR YOU THIS HELMET AND TAKE YOU THIS SWORD —

BEGGING YOUR PARDON, MA'AM. I'D KEEP ME SHOVEL IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU.

A SHOVEL FOR A WEAPON? IT IS STRANGE, BUT... VERY WELL. PROTECT YOU THIS LAND WITH YOUR SHOVEL SO LONG AS YOU ARE ABLE.

AYE, MA'AM.



"THE NEXT DAY, ROCKHOOF AWOKE EARLY TO GET TO TRAINING."

IT'S TIME!

"AFTER ALL, HE WAS ABOUT TO LIVE HIS FIRST DAY DOING THE THING HE HAD WANTED TO DO AS LONG AS HE COULD REMEMBER."

"HE WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION, SO HE GOT DRESSED AND READY AND REPORTED TO THE TRAINING GROUNDS."

OH, THIS? AYE, THIS IS THE SHOVEL THAT SAVED THE TOWN. OF COURSE YOU CAN TOUCH IT, BUT BE WARNED, IT'S STILL HOT.

"ROCKHOOF WAS A BIT NERVOUS, SO HE TALKED TO HIMSELF AS HE TROTTED THROUGH THE DEWY MORNING. HE WANTED TO ARRIVE A BIT EARLY."

"AS IT TURNS OUT, HE ARRIVED VERY EARLY!"

WORRY NOT! I'LL PREPARE FOR TRAINING WITH STRETCHES!

"OF COURSE, WHEN ONE RISES EARLY AND SITS AFIELD ALONE FOR SEVERAL HOURS..."

WHAT NONSENSE IS THIS? ROCKHOOF?!

"...THINGS DO TEND TO HAPPEN. SLEEPY THINGS."

REPORTING FOR DUTY, MA'AM.

NOT FOR ANOTHER HOUR YOU'RE NOT. I SUGGEST YOU PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER BEFORE THEN.

"AND ROCKHOOF DID JUST THAT."

"WHEN THE REST OF THE GUARD PONIES ARRIVED FOR TRAINING, HE SHOWED WHAT HE HAD BEEN TRAINING FOR."

"HE OUTRAN EVEN THE FASTEST OF THEIR NUMBER."

"HE PROVED ON THE OBSTACLE COURSE THAT HE WAS AS DEFT AS ANY GUARD PONY."

H
U
P

"AND WHEN IT CAME TIME FOR COMBAT PRACTICE, EVERY PONY WAS SURE THAT ROCKHOOF'S SHOVEL WOULD BE HIS UNDOING."

"BUT ROCKHOOF STOOD UP AND FACED HIS OPPONENT AS IF THERE WERE NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEIR WEAPONS."

"HE DISARMED HIS OPPONENT AND WON THE DAY."

H
U
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H!



WHERE ARE YOU OFF TO, ROCKHOOF?

HOME, FRIEND. MUST REST FOR THE SECOND DAY OF TRAINING.

NONSENSE, ROCKHOOF. COME TO DINNER WITH US. WE'D LOVE TO EAT WITH THE OPPONENT OF MOUNTAINS.

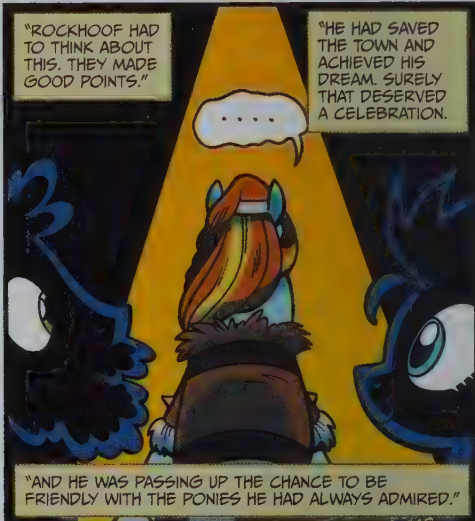


"ROCKHOOF HAD PLANNED TO EAT THE SAME HEALTHY MEAL HE'D PREPARED FOR YEARS TO GET TO JOIN THE HELM AND TURN IN EARLY!"

NEIGH, FRIENDS. I MUST KEEP UP WITH MY ROUTINE.

COME NOW! IF YOU DON'T CELEBRATE YOUR FIRST DAY IN THE MIGHTY HELM, WHEN WILL YOU CELEBRATE?

THE TAVERN ACROSS TOWN HAS A MASSIVE OAT BOWL CHALLENGE! IF YOU EAT THE WHOLE BOWL OF OATS, YOUR MEAL IS FREE.



"ROCKHOOF HAD TO THINK ABOUT THIS. THEY MADE GOOD POINTS."

"HE HAD SAVED THE TOWN AND ACHIEVED HIS DREAM. SURELY THAT DESERVED A CELEBRATION."

"AND HE WAS PASSING UP THE CHANCE TO BE FRIENDLY WITH THE PONIES HE HAD ALWAYS ADMIRRED."



DID YOU SAY CHALLENGE?

YAY!

YAY!

AND SO ROCKHOOF TOOK A DAY OFF. THIS WAS SOMETHING HE HAD NOT DONE SINCE DECIDING TO JOIN THE MIGHTY HELM AND WAS LONG OVERDUE.

CHEW! CHEW! CHEW! CHEW!



"BUT ROCKHOOF, AS IS WELL KNOWN, LOVED CHALLENGES."



CHEW!
CHEW! CHEW!
CHEW!

"AND EATING AN ENTIRE BOWL FULL OF OATS DID SEEM LIKE QUITE THE CHALLENGE."

"AND IT WAS A CHALLENGE HE WAS UP TO."

THAT WAS AMAZING, ROCKHOOF!

ALL HAIL ROCKHOOF! ENEMY TO VOLCANOES AND OATS!



"OTHER THAN A BIT OF A STOMACH ACHE, ROCKHOOF FELT GOOD. AS GOOD AS HE HAD EVER FELT."

TELL THEM, HOOFY! IT WAS ALL WITH ONE SHOVEL, WASN'T IT?

AYE! THE SAME SHOVEL I CARRY WITH ME NOW!

THEY SAY IF YOU FEEL IT, IT'S STILL A BIT HOT!



"ROCKHOOF WAS A MEMBER OF THE MIGHTY HELM, JUST LIKE HE HAD ALWAYS WANTED."

"EVEN BETTER, THEY LIKED HIM. HE HAD MADE IT. HE WAS THE HERO OF HIS TOWN!"



"THE NEXT MORNING WHEN ROCKHOOF AWOKED, HE DID NOT FEEL QUITE AS SPRY AS THE DAY BEFORE."



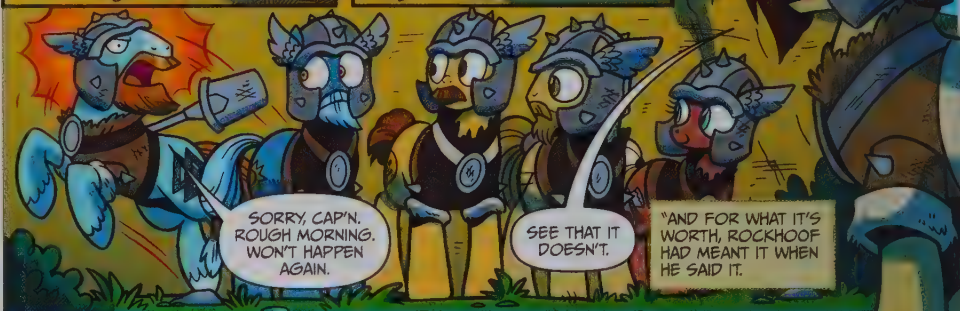
TRAINING!

"IN FACT, HE FELT LIKE HE HAD JUST EATEN AN ENTIRE BOAT FULL OF OATS."



OOF!

NICE OF YOU TO JOIN US, ROCKHOOF, BUT YOU'RE LATE.

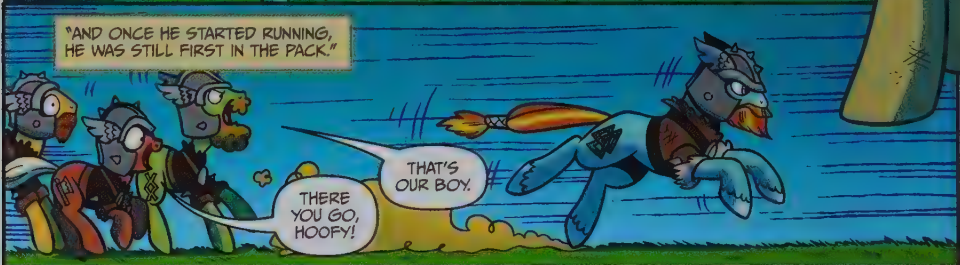


SORRY, CAP'N. ROUGH MORNING. WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.

SEE THAT IT DOESN'T.

"AND FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, ROCKHOOF HAD MEANT IT WHEN HE SAID IT.

"AND ONCE HE STARTED RUNNING, HE WAS STILL FIRST IN THE PACK."



THERE YOU GO, HOOFY!

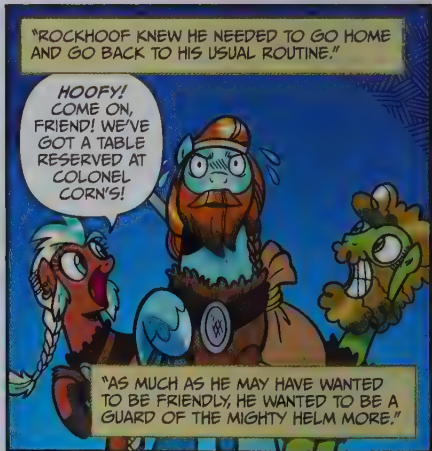
THAT'S OUR BOY.

"AND EVEN THOUGH HE WASN'T QUITE AS QUICK THIS TIME, HE STILL WON HIS TRAINING FIGHT."



HA!

"ROCKHOOF KNEW HE NEEDED TO GO HOME AND GO BACK TO HIS USUAL ROUTINE."



HOOFY! COME ON, FRIEND! WE'VE GOT A TABLE RESERVED AT COLONEL CORN'S!

"AS MUCH AS HE MAY HAVE WANTED TO BE FRIENDLY, HE WANTED TO BE A GUARD OF THE MIGHTY HELM MORE."



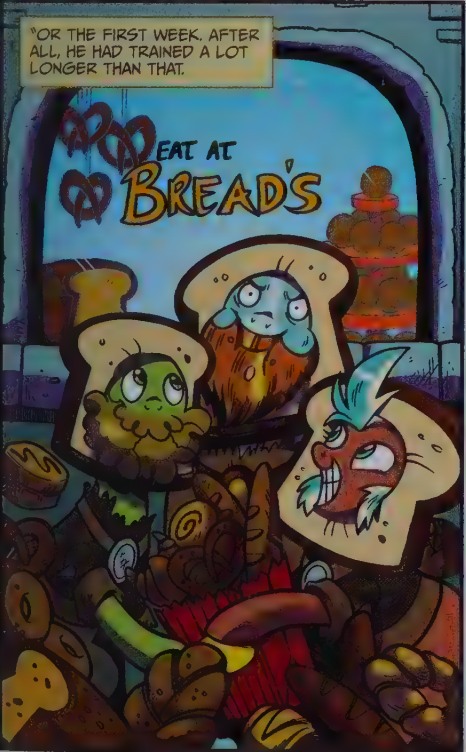
"BUT SURELY ONE MORE NIGHT OF FUN WITH FRIENDS WOULDN'T AFFECT THAT."

THE PIT OF CORN!
EAT
YOUR WAY OUT!



ASPARAGUS'S

"AND IF ONE MORE NIGHT WOULDN'T HURT, SURELY TWO WOULD BE FINE."



"OR THE FIRST WEEK. AFTER ALL, HE HAD TRAINED A LOT LONGER THAN THAT."

EAT AT
BREAD'S

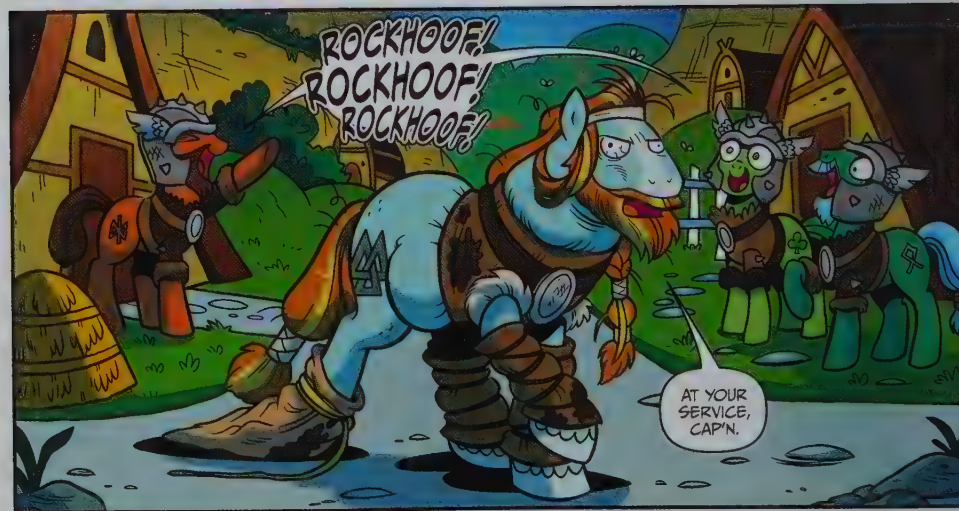


"OR THE FIRST MONTH."

Kale-Abraction

"SURE, HE MAY HAVE SLOWED DOWN A LITTLE. PERHAPS HE LOST A RACE EVERY NOW AND THEN."

"BUT HE HAD FRIENDS WHO REALLY LIKED HIM AND WHAT WAS THE POINT OF BEING SUCCESSFUL IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE TO SHARE IT WITH."





"ROCKHOOF CLIMBED FOR ALL HE WAS WORTH. HIS FRIENDS ON THE OTHER HAND—"

I DON'T KNOW THAT LOOKS AWFUL STEEP.

PERHAPS WE SHOULD COME BACK WITH PROPER CLIMBING EQUIPMENT.

"—TOOK EVERY CHANCE TO FIND A REASON WHY THEY COULD NOT DO THE TASK THEY WERE GIVEN."

THE ROCKS SEEM AWFULLY LOOSE HERE.

YES, WE SHOULD COME BACK AFTER THE FALLING ROCK SEASON IS OVER.

"THE FARTHER ALONG THEY GOT, THE MORE REASONS THEY HAD."

SEE, BATS WAS THE ONE THING I SWORE WOULD KEEP ME FROM FINISHING THIS QUEST.

RIGHT! BATS MEAN EVERYTHING IN THE VOLCANO IS OKAY, THOUGH, RIGHT?

"THOUGH, TO BE FAIR, THEY WERE NOT THE ONLY ONES WHO CAUSED DELAYS.

"HIS TIME IN THE MIGHTY HELM HAD NOT BEEN AS RIGOROUS AS WHEN HE HAD TRAINED TO PROVE HIMSELF!"

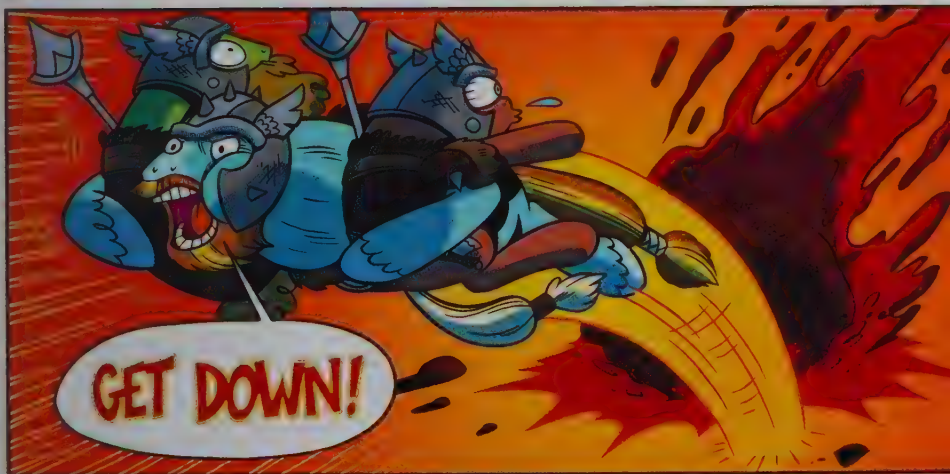
EXHAUSTED. USED TO CLIMB THIS EVERY DAY. SO TIRED.

"BUT IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING,
ROCKHOOF MADE IT TO THE
TOP OF THE VOLCANO."

DON'T DO
IT, ROCKHOOF!
DON'T GO
IN!

WE'LL JUST
TELL CAPTAIN
STEELA WE DIDN'T
SEE ANYTHING AND
HEAD BACK.

NEIGH,
WE HAVE A JOB
TO DO AND
WE'RE—



WE NEED TO GO
DOWN THERE AND SET
THIS STRAIGHT.

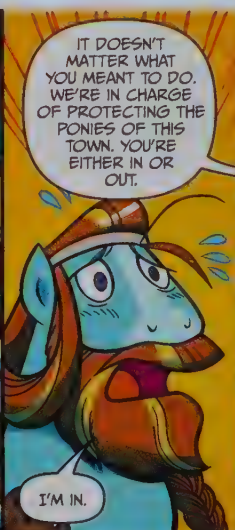
NO, WE DON'T! I
DON'T KNOW ABOUT
YOU, BUT I'M NOT
FIREPROOF.

WE'RE ONLY HERE TO
INVESTIGATE. WE REPORT
BACK AND LET SOMEONE
ELSE DEAL WITH...

...WHAT WAS
IT ANYWAY?









"SO HE WENT BACK TO HIS OLD ROUTINE.



"BUT THAT WASN'T ENOUGH. HE DOUBLED IT.



"HE HAD ACHIEVED HIS DREAMS AND HE HAD NO ONE TO BLAME FOR HIS FAILURE BUT HIMSELF.



"SO HE WOULD HAVE TO BE THE ONE TO GET IT BACK."



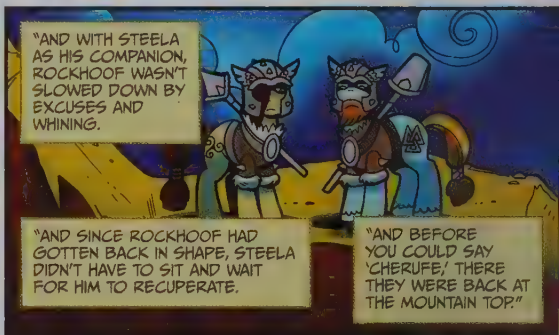
THIS IS GETTING WORSE. I'M GOING TO GO DEAL WITH IT MYSELF.

I'M COMING TOO!



BEING PART OF THE MIGHTY HELM IS ALL I EVER WANTED TO DO. IT'S TIME I PROVED IT.

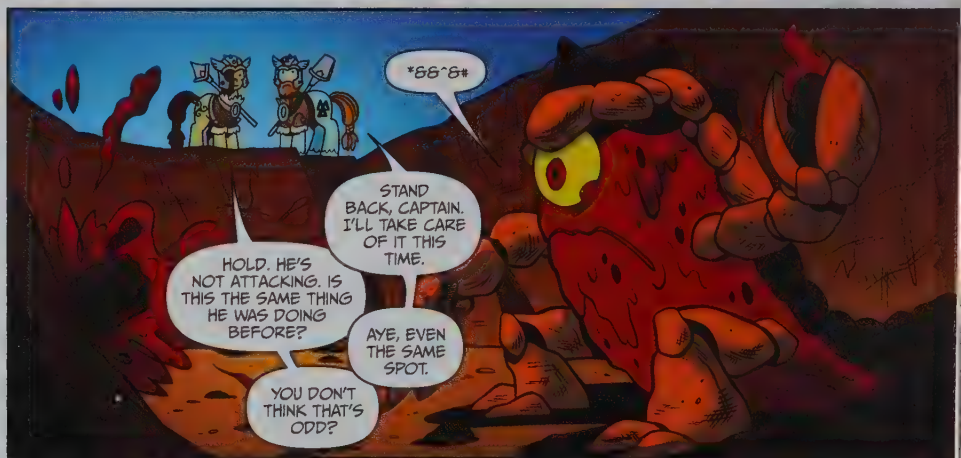
WELL, THEN, LET'S GO.



"AND WITH STEELA AS HIS COMPANION, ROCKHOOF WASN'T SLOWED DOWN BY EXCUSES AND WHINING.

"AND SINCE ROCKHOOF HAD GOTTEN BACK IN SHAPE, STEELA DIDN'T HAVE TO SIT AND WAIT FOR HIM TO RECUPERATE.

"AND BEFORE YOU COULD SAY 'CHERUFE,' THERE THEY WERE BACK AT THE MOUNTAIN TOP."



SS^S

STAND BACK, CAPTAIN. I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT THIS TIME.

HOLD. HE'S NOT ATTACKING. IS THIS THE SAME THING HE WAS DOING BEFORE?

AYE, EVEN THE SAME SPOT.

YOU DON'T THINK THAT'S ODD?



"AND ROCKHOOF LOOKED AT THE CREATURE, REALLY SEEING IT FOR THE FIRST TIME.

"AND WHAT HE SAW WAS HIMSELF. ONE CREATURE, DOING ONE THING, IN HOPE OF ACHIEVING A SINGLE GOAL.

"THE FIREBALLS WERE NOT AIMED AT THEM, THEY WERE BOUNCING OFF OF THE GROUND. OFF ONE SINGLE SPOT."



HALT, CREATURE!

"AND ROCKHOOF REMEMBERED SOMETHING HE HAD FORGOTTEN. HE HADN'T GOTTEN INTO THE MIGHTY HELM BY FIGHTING, OR RACING, OR DOING OBSTACLE COURSES.

"HE GOT IN BECAUSE HE HAD LOOKED AT A PROBLEM THAT DOZENS OF PONIES WERE ALREADY TRYING TO SOLVE—

"—AND HE HAD SEEN A SOLUTION NO ONE ELSE HAD SEEN."



HUH?

*6+*8*0@

88**@66**8*~

"NOT ONLY DID THE MOUNTAIN ANSWER THE CREATURE BACK. THE VOICE THAT ANSWERED SHOOK THE GROUND. AND THEN—

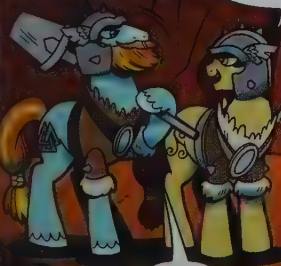
"—THE TINY CHERUFE THAT HAD BEEN TRYING TO GET HOME FINALLY FOUND ITS MOTHER."

SO, THERE YOU GO SAVING THE TOWN AGAIN.

HUH.

OF COURSE, THIS TIME IT TURNED OUT TO BE FROM A BABY.

YUP.





Art by Zachary Sterling



Art by Brenda Hickey



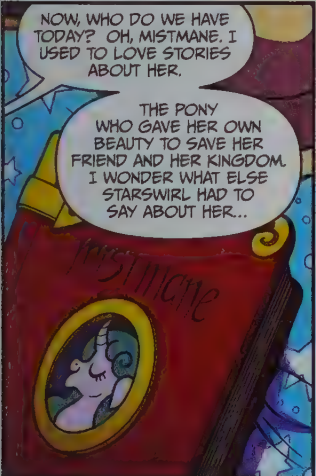


FINALLY,
A LITTLE TIME
TO READ.

THIS TIME I'M
READING BY MYSELF
LUNA'S ROYAL VOICE
NEARLY MADE ME JUMP
OUT OF MY SKIN
LAST TIME.

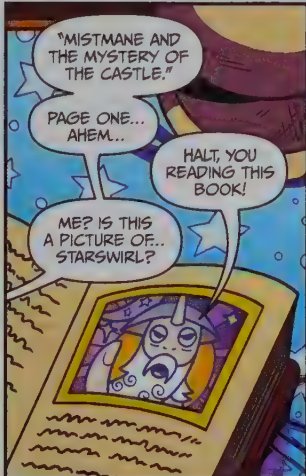


THERE, I'LL
JUST SETTLE IN AND
WE'LL GET STARTED
ON THE NEXT OF
THESE "LEGENDS
OF MAGIC."



NOW, WHO DO WE HAVE
TODAY? OH, MISTMANE. I
USED TO LOVE STORIES
ABOUT HER.

THE PONY
WHO GAVE HER OWN
BEAUTY TO SAVE HER
FRIEND AND HER KINGDOM.
I WONDER WHAT ELSE
STARSWIRL HAD TO
SAY ABOUT HER...

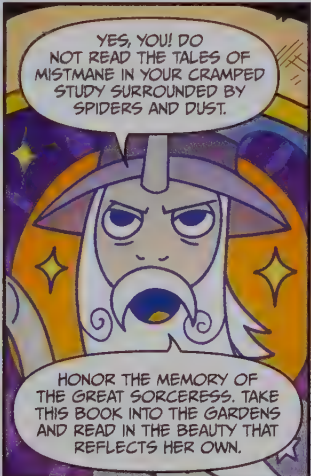


"MISTMANE AND
THE MYSTERY OF
THE CASTLE."

PAGE ONE...
AHEM...

HALT, YOU
READING THIS
BOOK!

ME? IS THIS
A PICTURE OF...
STARSWIRL?

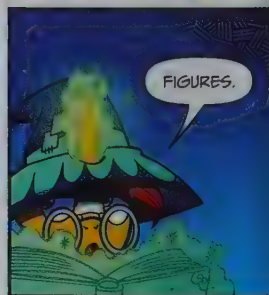
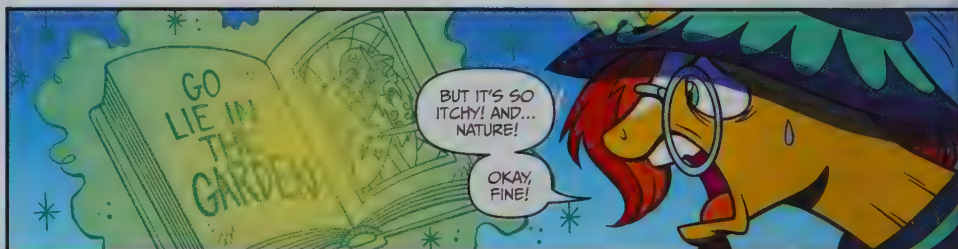


YES, YOU! DO
NOT READ THE TALES OF
MISTMANE IN YOUR CRAMPED
STUDY SURROUNDED BY
SPIDERS AND DUST.

HONOR THE MEMORY OF
THE GREAT SORCERESS. TAKE
THIS BOOK INTO THE GARDENS
AND READ IN THE BEAUTY THAT
REFLECTS HER OWN.



WELL, WHO'S
GOING TO KNOW?
STARSWIRL HAS
BEEN GONE FOR
HUNDREDS OF...



"NOW, EVERYPONY IS FAMILIAR WITH THE MISTMARE WHO WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF ALL PONIES.

"BUT AS I, STARSWIRL THE BEARDED, KNOW--A GREAT AND POWERFUL UNICORN DOES NOT STOP SAVING THE WORLD SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY GET OLD.

"HOW SHE WENT THROUGHOUT THE LAND SPREADING BEAUTY TO EVERY CORNER OF EQUESTRIA.

"HOW SHE GAVE UP HER BEAUTY TO SAVE HER FRIEND.

"NO, CONTRARY TO WHAT LEGEND WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE, MISTMARE'S GREATEST WORKS WERE YET TO COME.

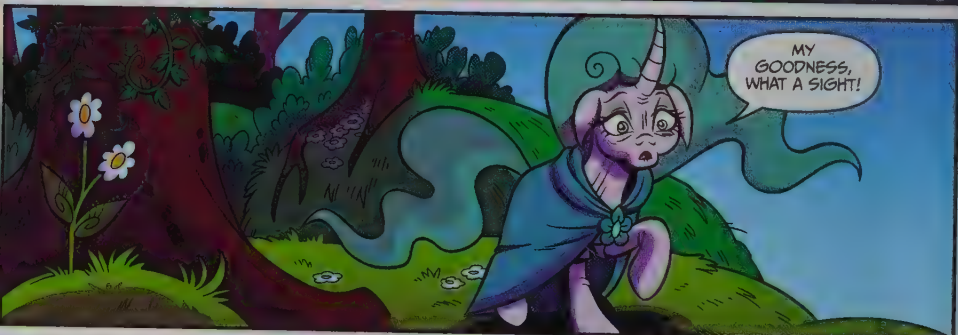
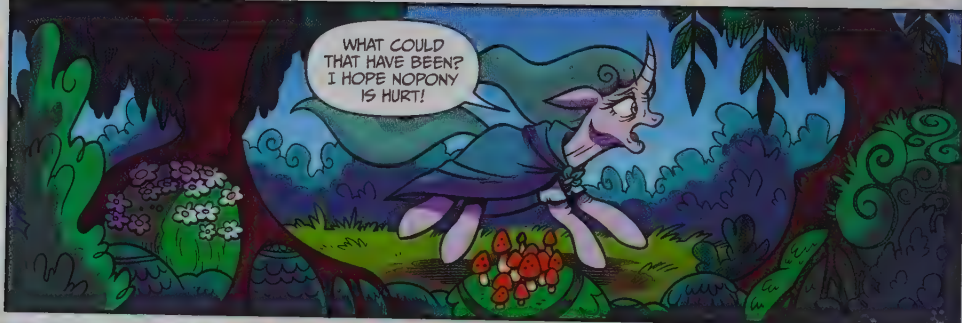
"INCLUDING ONE ADVENTURE WHERE SHE SOLVED A PROBLEM THAT EVEN I COULD NOT.

"THIS IS THE TALE OF MISTMARE AND THE MYSTERY OF THE UNBUILDING CASTLE."

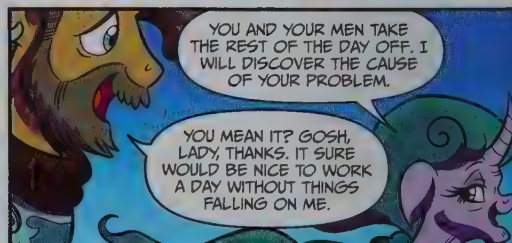
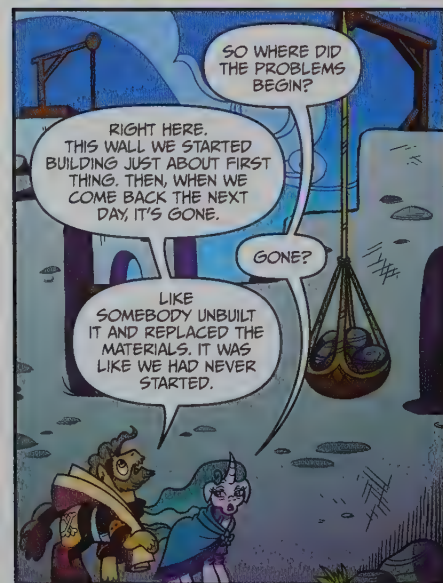
WELL, HELLO MY LITTLE FRIENDS, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL HOME YOU HAVE HERE.

I WONDER, WHATEVER DO YOU CALL THIS LOVELY PLACE?







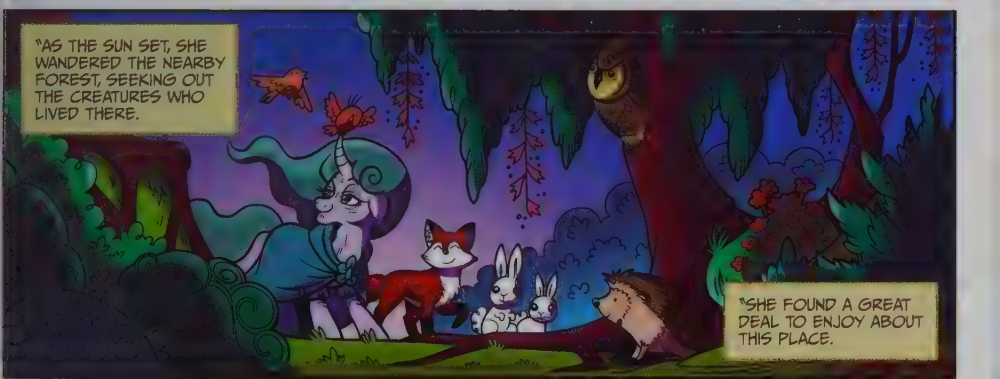




"AND SO MISTMANE SENT AWAY ALL OF THE WORKER PONIES AND KEPT WATCH OVER THE CONSTRUCTION SITE HERSELF.

A purple unicorn with a green mane and a blue cape, Mistmane, is walking through a construction site at dusk. In the background, there are large stone structures under construction, including a tall tower and a building with a crane. The sky is a mix of blue and purple with some clouds.

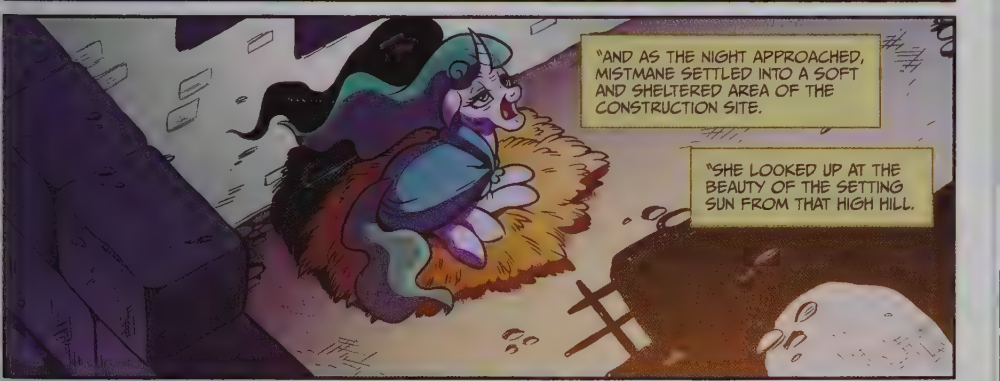
"SHE WALKED ALL AROUND AND ENJOYED THE BEAUTY OF THAT PLACE.



Mistmane is in a forest at night. She is surrounded by several other creatures: a red fox, two white rabbits, and a hedgehog. There are trees with green leaves and some flowers on the ground. The scene is lit with a mix of green and blue light.

"AS THE SUN SET, SHE WANDERED THE NEARBY FOREST, SEEKING OUT THE CREATURES WHO LIVED THERE.

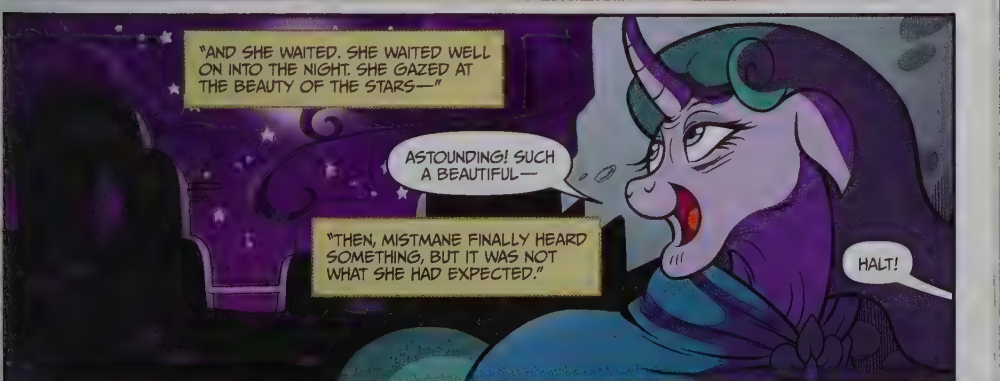
"SHE FOUND A GREAT DEAL TO ENJOY ABOUT THIS PLACE.



Mistmane is sitting on a nest made of straw and hay on a construction site at night. She is looking up at the sky. In the background, there are stone structures and a large pile of rubble. The scene is lit with a mix of purple and blue light.

"AND AS THE NIGHT APPROACHED, MISTMANE SETTLED INTO A SOFT AND SHELTERED AREA OF THE CONSTRUCTION SITE.

"SHE LOOKED UP AT THE BEAUTY OF THE SETTING SUN FROM THAT HIGH HILL.



Mistmane is looking up at the stars in the night sky. She is lying down on her side, looking up with a wide-eyed expression. The sky is dark purple with many stars. There are some clouds in the background.

"AND SHE WAITED. SHE WAITED WELL ON INTO THE NIGHT. SHE GAZED AT THE BEAUTY OF THE STARS—"

"ASTOUNDING! SUCH A BEAUTIFUL—"

"THEN, MISTMANE FINALLY HEARD SOMETHING, BUT IT WAS NOT WHAT SHE HAD EXPECTED."

"HALT!"



WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHO ARE YOU?

I WOULD ASK YOU THE SAME THING.



ME? THIS IS WHERE I BELONG!

IS IT?

YES! I AM PRINCESS LUNA OF EQUESTRIA. THIS CASTLE IS BEING BUILT FOR MY SISTER AND ME.



AND WHAT BUSINESS DOES A PRINCESS HAVE AT AN UNBUILT CASTLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, YOUNG LUNA?

WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT IT IS EVIL?

LIKE I SAID, IT IS MY CASTLE. IT HAS BEEN LONG DELAYED DUE TO SOME— EVIL MAGIC.



WELL, OF COURSE IT'S EVIL. IT'S BEEN WREAKING HAVOC ON THE CASTLE. IT'S KEEPING IT FROM BEING BUILT.

I SEE. AND WHY WOULD SOME NEFARIOUS UNICORN WARLOCK WISH TO KEEP YOUR CASTLE FROM BEING BUILT?

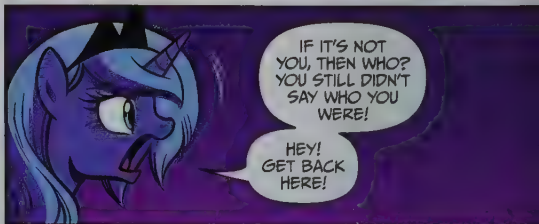
I DON'T... HEY, WHO ARE YOU ANYWAY?



ME? I'M JUST A FRIEND.

BUT HOW DO I KNOW YOU'RE NOT THE ONE USING THIS MAGIC? YOU WERE AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE.

I GUESS YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO HAVE A LITTLE BLIND FAITH.



IF IT'S NOT YOU, THEN WHO? YOU STILL DIDN'T SAY WHO YOU WERE!

HEY! GET BACK HERE!





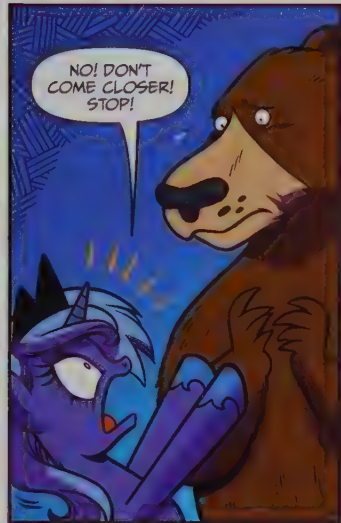






OKAY, BEAR,
NOW YOU AND YOUR
FRIENDS JUST GO AWAY
FROM MY CASTLE. I
DON'T WANT TO HAVE
TO HURT YOU.

SCOOT SCOOT
SHUFFLE SHUFFLE
SGO OT SGOOT



NO! DON'T
COME CLOSER!
STOP!



REMEMBER, I
SAID WATCH AND
LISTEN. YOU'RE NOT
LISTENING.

WELL I
DON'T SPEAK
BEAR!

SPEECH IS NOT THE
ONLY LANGUAGE. READ
THEIR MOVEMENTS. READ
THEIR ACTIONS.



HUH...OKAY,
WELL...THEY'RE
TAKING APART THE
CASTLE SO...

IS IT THAT
THEY NEED THE
SUPPLIES?

LOOK
A LITTLE
CLOSER.



IS IT ...IS IT THE
CASTLE? DO THEY
NOT WANT US TO
BUILD IT?

NOD
NOD
NOD

HE NODDED!
HE UNDERSTOOD
ME! BUT WHY
WOULDN'T THEY
WANT US TO BUILD
A CASTLE?

"AND SO, THAT NIGHT, LUNA—THE YOUNGER OF THE TWO SISTERS—SAT DOWN AND ASKED QUESTIONS TO THE CREATURES OF CANTERLOT FOREST.

"SHE STILL COULDN'T SPEAK TO THEM, BUT WHEN SHE SLOWED DOWN AND PAID ATTENTION, SHE FOUND IT WASN'T SO HARD TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE CREATURES WANTED.



"AND MISTMARE, AS THE NIGHT WORE ON, SLOWLY BACKED AWAY. LUNA NEVER EVEN REALIZED SHE WAS GONE."

SO, YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT LOSING YOUR HOMES? THAT THE CASTLE, WITH ITS GIANT WALLS, WILL COVER EVERYTHING?



"LUNA LEARNED THAT THE ISSUE WAS NOT THAT THERE WOULD BE A CASTLE, BUT HOW BIG IT WOULD BE AND WHAT IT WOULD DO TO THEIR FOREST."

OKAY, I THINK WE'VE GOT SOMETHING HERE. INSTEAD OF AN ARMORED FORTRESS TO KEEP OUT EVERYONE, IT'S A SHINING BEACON OF HOPE, WELCOMING OTHERS IN?



AND WE'LL HAVE A MAGNIFICENT GARDEN. ALL OF THE ANIMALS WHO LIVE HERE NOW CAN STAY AND WILL ALLOW PONIES TO COME AND SEE THEM.

YOU CAN ALL LIVE SIDE BY SIDE WITH OUR CASTLE. WOULD THAT WORK?



OH MY, IT'S ALREADY MORNING. I NEED TO GET BACK.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO TALK TO ME. I'LL REMEMBER TO LISTEN IN THE FUTURE.

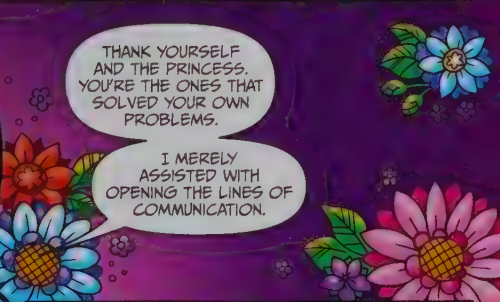




"AND AS THE SUN ROSE
AND LUNA LEFT, MISTMARE
FINALLY EMERGED."



I AM VERY
PROUD OF YOU
ALL. WHAT DID
I TELL YOU?



THANK YOURSELF
AND THE PRINCESS.
YOU'RE THE ONES THAT
SOLVED YOUR OWN
PROBLEMS.



I MERELY
ASSISTED WITH
OPENING THE LINES OF
COMMUNICATION.



IT LOOKS LIKE
IT'S GOING TO BE
BEAUTIFUL. MAYBE
THESE PRINCESSES ARE
EXACTLY WHAT THE
WORLD NEEDS.



YOU ALL HAD
BETTER GET BACK TO
THE FOREST BEFORE
THE BUILDERS GET
BACK. SPEAKING
OF WHICH—



THEY WON'T HAVE
ANY MORE TROUBLE
FROM YOU, WILL THEY?
EXCELLENT.

"NOW, THOUGH I WOULD NOT HEAR OR KNOW THIS STORY IN ITS ENTIRETY FOR SOME TIME, THIS IS WHERE I ENTER IT."

PRINCESS LUNA,
YOU ARE A SOVEREIGN OF
EQUESTRIA. YOU SHOULD NOT
BE LEAVING THE CASTLE ON
YOUR OWN IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE NIGHT.

BUT STARSWIRL, THEY
WERE TAKING THE CASTLE
APART. IF SOMEONE HADN'T
COME AND TALKED TO THEM,
WE NEVER WOULD HAVE HAD
A NEW PLACE TO LIVE.

SO YOU EXPECT US TO
BELIEVE THAT YOU FLEW OUT
HERE AND SPOKE TO ANIMALS
EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE NEVER
BEEN ABLE TO DO THAT
BEFORE?

IT WASN'T LIKE THAT.
THEY DIDN'T SAY WORDS, BUT I
TOOK TIME TO ASK QUESTIONS
AND SEE THEIR REACTIONS. IT'S
NOT THAT HARD WHEN YOU
MAKE AN EFFORT.

THE LEAST YOU
COULD DO IS MAKE YOUR
LIES MORE MAGICAL,
LUNA.

"BUT AS LUNA SHOWED US THE DESIGN
THAT SHE AND THESE SUPPOSED ANIMALS
HAD COME UP WITH, I BEGAN TO REALIZE
THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING TO IT.

"THE FORTRESS HAD BEEN
MY DESIGN. I WANTED THE
GIRLS TO BE SAFE.

"BUT I REALIZED THEN THAT THEIR SAFETY
WOULD BE DETERMINED MORE BY HOW
THEY RULED THAN WHERE THEY LIVED.

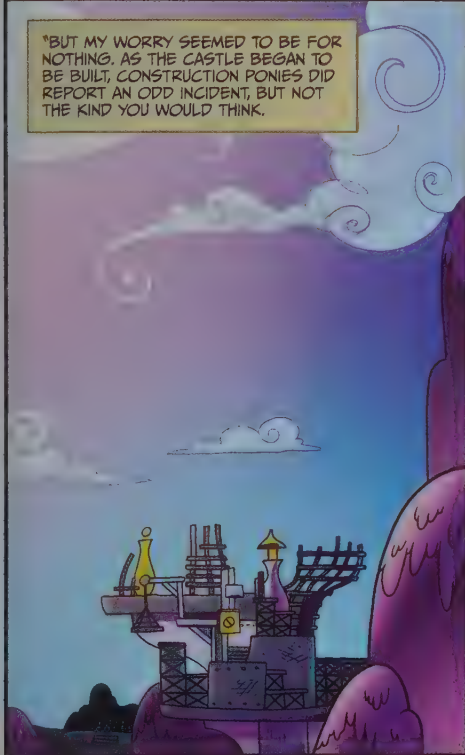
"AND IF LUNA'S STORY WAS TRUE AND
HER BLUEPRINTS WERE ANY INDICATION,
THEY WERE ON THE WAY TO A LONG
AND SAFE RULE OF THE KINGDOM.

PRINCESS
FORTRESS
CAME
PLAN

"THE FOREPONY OF THE CONSTRUCTION TEAM SEEMED A BIT
CONFUSED WHEN WE SHOWED HIM THE NEW PLAN, BUT HE WAS
HAPPY TO HAVE THE PROMISE THAT HIS JOB WOULD NO LONGER
BE OBSTRUCTED BY THE SURROUNDING WILDLIFE.

"THE ONLY THING THAT CONCERNED
ME WERE THOSE GARDENS. THERE
WAS NO TELLING WHAT THE ANIMALS
WANTED. IF THE GARDENS WERE
NOT TO THEIR SATISFACTION,
WOULD THEY REVOLT?"

"BUT MY WORRY SEEMED TO BE FOR NOTHING. AS THE CASTLE BEGAN TO BE BUILT, CONSTRUCTION PONIES DID REPORT AN ODD INCIDENT, BUT NOT THE KIND YOU WOULD THINK.



"TOOLS THEY HAD LOST MONTHS AGO APPEARED JUST WHEN THEY NEEDED THEM. PROJECTS THAT WERE LEFT UNFINISHED OVERNIGHT WOULD SUDDENLY BE COMPLETE THE NEXT MORNING.



"THE WORK PONIES HAD RENEWED STRENGTH OF SPIRIT. THE CASTLE WENT UP MUCH FASTER THAN ANY OF US THOUGHT IT WOULD.



"FINALLY, THE BEACON OF HOPE THAT LUNA AND HER WOODLAND FRIENDS HAD ENVISIONED WAS COMPLETE. ALL THAT WAS LEFT WAS THE GARDENS.



"THE WORKPONIES BROUGHT SOME POTTERY, BUT THEY DIDN'T HAVE THE SKILLS TO CREATE THE SORT OF BEAUTIFUL GARDEN THAT THAT CASTLE DEMANDED."

"THAT, I IMAGINED,
WOULD FALL TO ME."

LET'S SEE NOW.
MAGICAL FIGUS... FERNS...
FEATHER GRASS...
FENNEL.

"TO MY SURPRISE, THE JOB
WAS ALREADY COMPLETED.
AND THEY HAD DONE A MUCH
BETTER JOB THAN I EVER
WOULD HAVE."

"IN HER EXCITEMENT, LUNA HAD
FORGOTTEN TO TELL ME ABOUT THE
STRANGE HOODED PONY SHE HAD
MET. IT WOULD BE WEEKS BEFORE
SHE REMEMBERED TO TELL ME."

"WHICH IS ODD, BECAUSE EVEN
THOUGH THAT PART OF THE STORY
HAD NOT BEEN SHARED WITH ME—

"BUT WHEN I TRIED TO
FOLLOW THE SHAPE, I
LOST HER."

"AND FOUND ONLY
FLOWERS... BUT...
THE FLOWERS MADE
ME IMMEDIATELY
THINK OF MISTMANE."

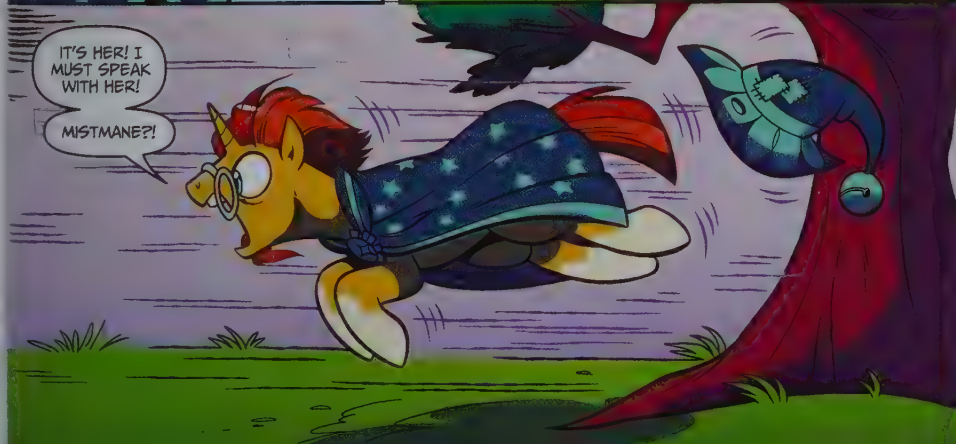
"SOME NIGHTS, WHEN A SPELL
WAS VEXING ME, I WOULD GO
FOR WALKS IN THE GARDENS."

"AND SOMETIMES I WAS SURE
I SAW A HOODED UNICORN
TENDING THE PLANTS."

"—I COULD HAVE SWORN
I SAW THE SHADOW OF A
HOODED PONY WALKING
THROUGH THE GARDEN."

"PERHAPS IT WAS THAT LEGENDARY PONY, AND SHE
KNEW A LESSON THAT IT WOULD TAKE ME YEARS
OF TEACHING LUNA AND CELESTIA TO LEARN.

"THAT THE MOST MAGICAL
THING YOU CAN TEACH A
PONY IS HOW TO SOLVE
THEIR OWN PROBLEMS."





AFTER ALL,
MISTMARE IS ONLY
A LEGEND.

A GREAT
LEGEND, BUT ONLY
A LEGEND.

I HAVE
A LOT MORE
TO READ.

Art by Zachary Sterling



Art by Brenda Hickey





SUNBURST!
YOU GET OUT
HERE RIGHT THIS
MOMENT!

DON'T YOU MAKE
ME TEAR DOWN THIS
DOOR! YOU KNOW
I'LL DO IT!

WAIT! WAIT!
I'M COMING!



WHY DO YOU
ALWAYS INSIST ON
DESTROYING MY
DOOR?

BECAUSE YOU
ARE VERY SLOW
TO ANSWER IT AND
BECAUSE I HAD TO
KNOCK ON IT
AT ALL.

WHAT?!



I SENT YOU A MESSAGE DAYS
AGO LETTING YOU KNOW THAT
TWILIGHT AND I WERE GOING TO BE
IN CANTERLOT AND THAT I WANTED
TO GET LUNCH WITH MY FRIEND
WHILE WE WERE HERE. WITH YOU
LIVING IN THE CRYSTAL EMPIRE
I FEEL LIKE I NEVER
SEE YOU.

YES! AND NOT
ONLY WAS THERE NO
RESPONSE, I'VE BEEN
HERE FOR TWO DAYS
AND HAVEN'T SEEN
YOU ONCE.

YOU DID?



WELL... I
GUESS MAYBE
I'VE BEEN A BIT
DISTRACTED.

YOU DON'T
SAY. WHAT COULD
POSSIBLY BE SO
FASCINATING?

HOLD ON!
BE CAREFUL!





WHAT?

O—OKAY.

YOU WERE GOING TO READ IT, WEREN'T YOU? WELL, READ IT TO ME AND WE CAN SPEND TIME TOGETHER.



YOU KNOW, I HAD PLANNED ON READING ON MY BED.

I'M SURE YOUR DESK WILL BE MORE COMFORTABLE. BESIDES, YOU NEED TO REALLY PROJECT SO I CAN HEAR YOU.

I GUESS THAT MAKES SENSE.

AND DO ALL THE VOICES. THAT'S THE BEST PART.



"IN CLOUDSDALE, THE PEGASUS CHILDREN ARE RAISED ON TALES OF THE OLD ROYAL LEGION.

AND OF THOSE GREAT WARRIORS, THE ONE HELD WITH THE MOST ESTEEM IS FLASH MAGNUS."



"OF COURSE, FLASH MAGNUS IS MOST FAMOUS FOR HIS BRAVERY IN FACING DRAGONS AND HIS USE OF HIS SHIELD.

"BUT JUST AS WHEN YOU LOOK AT CLOUDSDALE FROM BELOW, THAT SHOWS YOU ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE WHOLE.



"FLASH MAGNUS WAS YOUNG DURING HIS FABLED ENCOUNTER WITH THE DRAGONS AND HAD MANY MORE ADVENTURES AHEAD OF HIM.

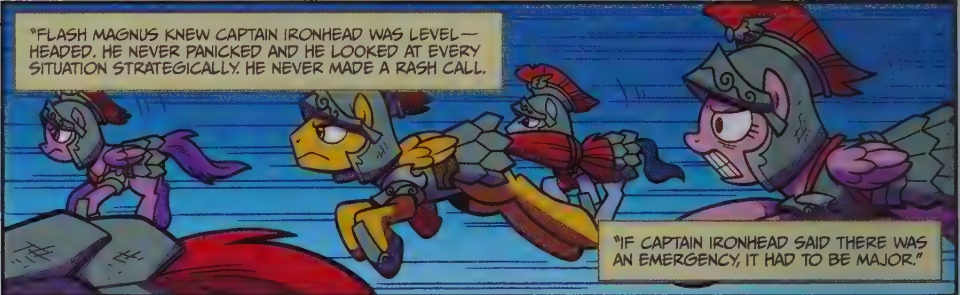
"PERHAPS THE MOST OF NOTE WAS THE ROYAL LEGION'S BATTLE WITH THE DREAD STORM."



EVERYPONY
GET TO THE RUNWAY
NOW! WE HAVE AN
EMERGENCY ON
OUR HANDS.

HEY,
GRIMHOOF,
WHAT'S GOING
ON?

CAPTAIN IRONHEAD IS
CALLING AN EMERGENCY
BRIEFING. ALL HANDS
ON DECK.



*FLASH MAGNUS KNEW CAPTAIN IRONHEAD WAS LEVEL-
HEADED. HE NEVER PANICKED AND HE LOOKED AT EVERY
SITUATION STRATEGICALLY. HE NEVER MADE A RASH CALL.

"IF CAPTAIN IRONHEAD SAID THERE WAS
AN EMERGENCY, IT HAD TO BE MAJOR."



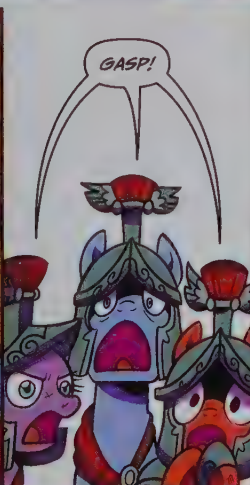
WHAT'S
ALL THIS
ABOUT?

I HEARD IT
WAS SOMETHING
ABOUT CHOCOLATE
MILK RAIN.

THAT'S
NONSENSE. I
HEARD IT WAS
DRAGONS
AGAIN.

ATTENTION!

LISTEN UP,
YOU WINGED
WARRIORS!





SIR, WHERE'S THE STORM NOW?

IT'S OVER GRIFFON TERRITORY, FLASH MAGNUS, BUT WE'RE MUCH MORE CONCERNED ABOUT WHERE IT'S GOING.



IT'S ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH CLOUDSDALE.



MOST OF THE GARRISON WILL BE GOING TO CLOUDSDALE AS THE LAST LINE OF DEFENSE, BUT THE FIVE FASTEST, INCLUDING MYSELF, ARE GOING TO TRY TO HEAD THIS THING OFF BEFORE IT GETS ANYWHERE CLOSE TO CLOUDSDALE.

WE'RE GONNA SHOW THAT STORM WHO'S THE BOSS AROUND HERE! THE REST OF YOU GET TO CLOUDSDALE. I NEED THESE FOUR PONIES IN THE AIR WITH ME, NOW!



"NIMBUS DASH.

"BELLA BREEZE.

"FLASH MAGNUS.

"AND THE FIFTH FASTEST, GRIMHOOF!"

NOW, YOU
FOUR LISTEN
UP!

THIS STORM IS
LIKE NOTHING WE'VE
EVER SEEN BEFORE. WE
PROBABLY WON'T BE
ABLE TO CUT THROUGH
THE MIDDLE OF IT.

WE'LL HAVE TO
TAKE BITS OF IT
OFF AND TRIM
IT DOWN.



OH, COME ON,
OLD TIMER. IT'S JUST
A STORM, RIGHT?
WE GOT THIS.

YOU TAKE THAT
APPROACH AND YOU'RE
GONNA END UP HEADFIRST
THROUGH SOME PONY'S
HOUSE. THESE THINGS
ARE DANGEROUS.

I THINK WHAT
NIMBUS IS TRYING TO
SAY IS THAT IT'S NOT
LIKE A LIVING OPPONENT.
STORMS DON'T
COUNTERATTACK.

TRUE ENOUGH,
BUT THAT MAKES THEM
ALL THE MORE DANGEROUS.
STORMS ARE UNPREDICTABLE.
THERE'S NO SAYING WHAT
THEY'LL DO.

WE'RE
GETTING CLOSE
NOW. WOULD YOU
LOOK AT THAT
THING!

IS THAT
THE STORM?
IT'S—



—ENORMOUS.





OKAY, LEGIONNAIRES, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO. MAKE YOUR PONIES PROU—

HOLD IT!



DON'T YOU FLY ONE INCH FARTHER OR YOU'LL HAVE TO ANSWER TO ME AND MY TEAM!



YEAH? AND WHO ARE YOU?

NAME'S BLACKBEAK, HEAD OF THE ROYAL GRIFFON DEFENSE FORCE.

WELL, I'M IRONHEAD, CAPTAIN OF THE ROYAL LEGION, AND WE ARE HERE TO DEAL WITH A ROGUE STORM.



BY "ROGUE STORM" YOU MEAN THE WEAPON YOU COOKED UP TO TAKE OUT THE GRIFFONS?

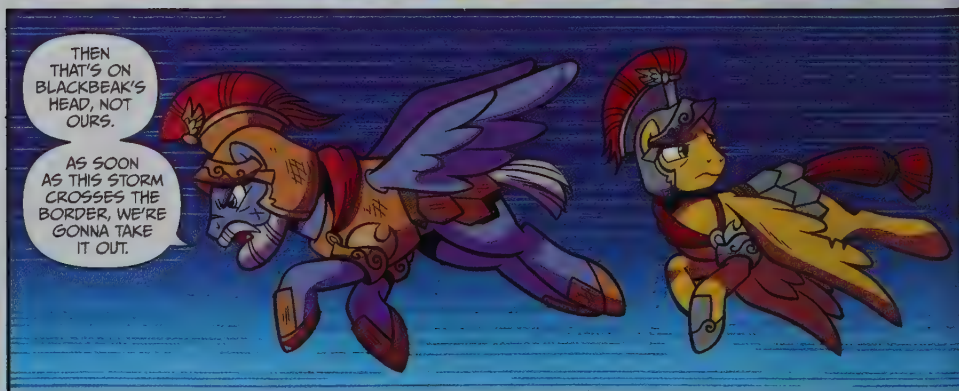
WHAT?!

YOU TELL EVERYONE YOU'RE GOING TO HELP CONTROL OUR WEATHER AND THEN IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT YOU LET LOOSE A STORM LIKE THIS ON US.

NOW SEE HERE, IT WAS AN ACCIDENT. THE WEATHER FACTORY JUST—



I DON'T BELIEVE IN ACCIDENTS!



MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE STORM, BLACKBEAK WAS BRINGING HIS TEAM TO BEAR.

OKAY, GRIFFONS, THIS IS YOUR TIME. ARE YOU READY?

YEAH!

YOU GONNA SHOW THOSE SHOW PONIES HOW GRIFFONS GET THINGS DONE?

YEAH!







WELL, I CAN'T SEE WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THAT STORM'S GETTING ANY SMALLER.

AS SOON AS THIS THING GOES OVER THE BORDER, BE READY.

CAPTAIN, WHERE IS THE BORDER ANYWAY?



SEE THAT RIVER THERE? THAT'S WHERE THE GRIFFON KINGDOM STOPS AND THE PEGASUS KINGDOM BEGINS.

SO, SOON AS IT CLEARS THAT WE'RE ON THE JOB?

AFFIRMATIVE.

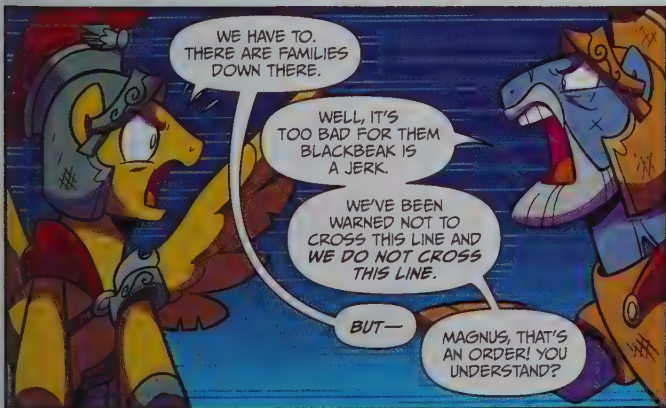


BUT, SIR, THAT TOWN THERE IS RIGHT IN THE PATH OF THE STORM.

SO IT IS.

DO WE?

WE HAVE TO HELP THEM!



WE HAVE TO. THERE ARE FAMILIES DOWN THERE.

WELL, IT'S TOO BAD FOR THEM BLACKBEAK IS A JERK.

WE'VE BEEN WARNED NOT TO CROSS THIS LINE AND WE DO NOT CROSS THIS LINE.

BUT—

MAGNUS, THAT'S AN ORDER! YOU UNDERSTAND?



YES, SIR.



"AND A LITTLE WHILE LATER, IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BEAKWICK, THE SKY BEGAN TO DARKEN.

"AND ALL AT ONCE, IT BECAME OBVIOUS TO THE TOWNSFOLK THAT THE ROYAL GRIFFON DEFENSE FORCE HAD FAILED.

"FIRST CAME THE DARKNESS.

"THEN THE WIND.



"THEN CAME THE WORST OF THE STORM.

"BY THAT TIME THE WIND WAS TOO HEAVY FOR YOUNG GRIFFONS TO FLY.

"AND THEY WERE TRAPPED BETWEEN THE STORM AND THE RIVER CANYON.



"IRONHEAD SAW WHAT WAS HAPPENING, BUT HIS MIND WAS MADE UP."

AS SOON AS THAT THING GETS OVER THE RIVER, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO. WE DON'T WANT OUR PONIES ENDING UP LIKE THEM.



SIR, PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESCUE FOR THE GRIFFONS OF THAT TOWN.

DENIED.

BUT SIR—

YOU GO OVER THAT LINE AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ROYAL LEGION, YOU START A WAR, WHICH WAY DO YOU THINK MORE GRIFFONS GET HURT?

"BUT FLASH MAGNUS HAD MADE UP HIS MIND TOO. HE HAD MADE IT UP BEFORE HE EVEN ASKED."

THEN
I'M AFRAID
I QUIT, SIR.

MAGNUS!
GET BACK
HERE!

"BUT FLASH WAS ALREADY MOVING TOO FAST TO HEAR HIS CAPTAIN."

"THE SOUND OF THE STORM DROWNED OUT EVERYTHING."

"EVERYTHING BUT THE KNOWLEDGE THAT HE HAD TO SAVE THESE GRIFFONS!"

HANG ON,
KIDS!

HUH?

GOTTA
GO FASTER!
GOTTA SAVE
THEM!

"BUT FLASH KNEW HE WASN'T FAST ENOUGH. NO MATTER HOW QUICKLY HE MOVED, HE WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO SAVE ALL OF THESE GRIFFONS WITH SPEED ALONE."

"BUT..."

"SOMETIMES THE GREATEST WEAPON A HERO HAS IS NOT THEIR SPEED OR STRENGTH—"

KID'S A FOOL. NO GRIFFON IS GONNA BUILD HIM A STATUE WHEN HE GETS HURT HELPING THEM!

I'M GOING, WITH OR WITHOUT YOU TWO.

IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

I REALLY DON'T WANNA GET KICKED OUT OF THE LEGION.

GRIMMY!

FINE!

"—BUT THE EXAMPLE THEY SET FOR OTHERS."

SORRY, BOSS, WE GOT A FELLOW LEGIONNAIRE TO HELP!

PLEASE DON'T BE MAD.

BE MAD, BUT PLEASE DON'T KICK US OUT!

GET BACK HERE!

"FLASH MAGNUS NEVER WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SAVE THE VILLAGE ALONE—"

"—BUT ONCE YOU PUT FOUR OF THE FIVE FASTEST PEGASUS IN EQUESTRIA ON A TASK..."

LOOK OUT BELOW, EVERYONE!

"...IT TENDS TO GET DONE QUICKLY!"

"AND NO SOONER WERE THEY DONE
THAN THE STORM FINALLY CROSSED
OVER THE BOUNDARY!"

SIR, I KNOW I'M
PROBABLY NOT WELCOME
IN THE LEGION
ANYMORE.

BUT I HOPE YOU
DON'T MIND IF I STILL
GIVE YOU A HOOF WITH
THIS STORM.

COME ON, YOUNG
BUCKS. WE'LL SORT
ALL THIS OUT AFTER
CLOUDSDALE IS
SAFE.

YES, SIR!

NOW LET'S GET
IN FORMATION AND
BRING THIS STORM
DOWN!

"AND ONCE THE TEAM STARTED,
THERE WAS NO STOPPING THEM.

"BECAUSE WHILE THEY DIDN'T
HAVE AS MUCH BLUSTER AS
THE GRIFFONS HAD, THEY
HAD TEAMWORK.

"THEY CLIPPED THE CLOUDS WITH
PRECISION. THEY WHISKED AWAY THE
RAIN. THEY DODGED THE LIGHTNING.

"AND JUST LIKE THAT—"



"THE STRONGEST STORM IN EQUESTIRA WAS STOPPED BEFORE IT EVER GOT CLOSE TO CLOUDSDALE."

HURRAY!

THEY DID IT!

YAY!

OUR HEROES!

"AND THE ROYAL LEGION BECAME HEROES TO THE GRIFFONS."

"IN FACT, WHILE YOU MAY HEAR THE STORY ABOUT THE DRAGONS MORE IN CLOUDSDALE, I AM TOLD THAT IF YOU ASK ABOUT FLASH MAGNUS IN GRIFFONSTONE, YOU'LL HEAR THIS TALE."

"AND NOT ONLY WERE THOSE FOUR PEGASI NOT KICKED OUT OF THE ROYAL LEGION, THEY WERE AWARDED SPECIAL MEDALS FOR VALOR."

"FOR THEIR ACTIONS BROUGHT THE TWO KINGDOMS CLOSER TOGETHER AND BEGAN A TREND OF YOUNG GRIFFONS AND PEGASI ATTENDING FLIGHT SCHOOL TOGETHER."

"AND FLASH MAGNUS WOULD GO ON TO SHARE SEVERAL MORE GREAT ADVENTURES."



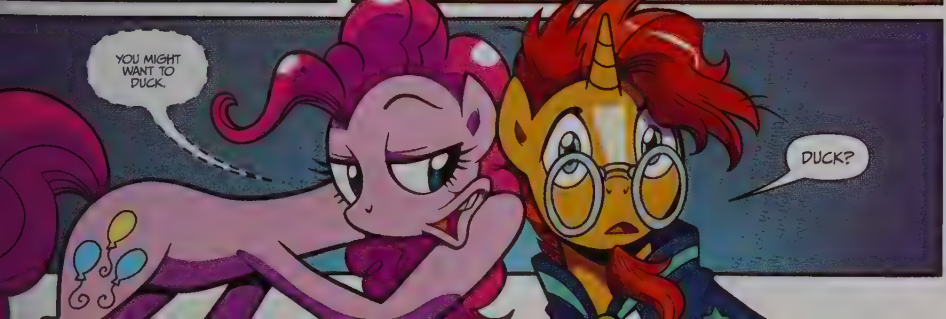
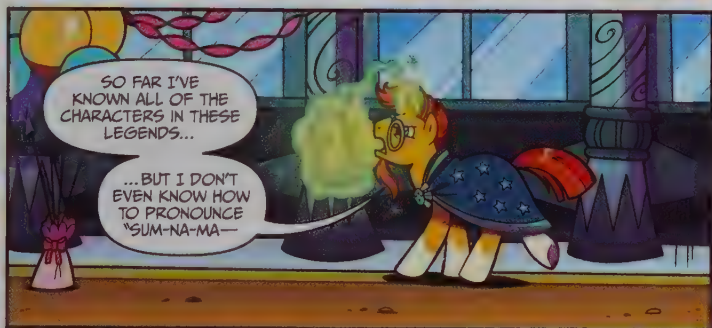
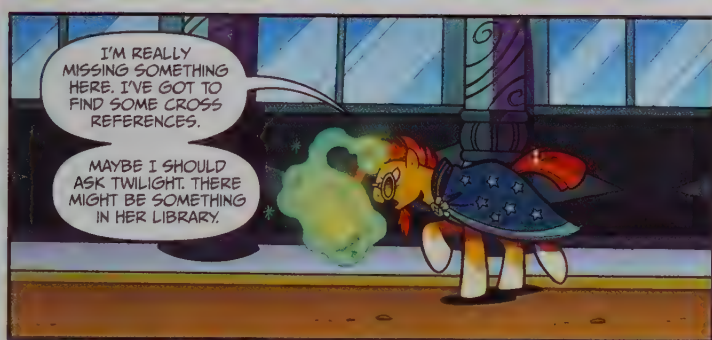
Art by Zachary Sterling

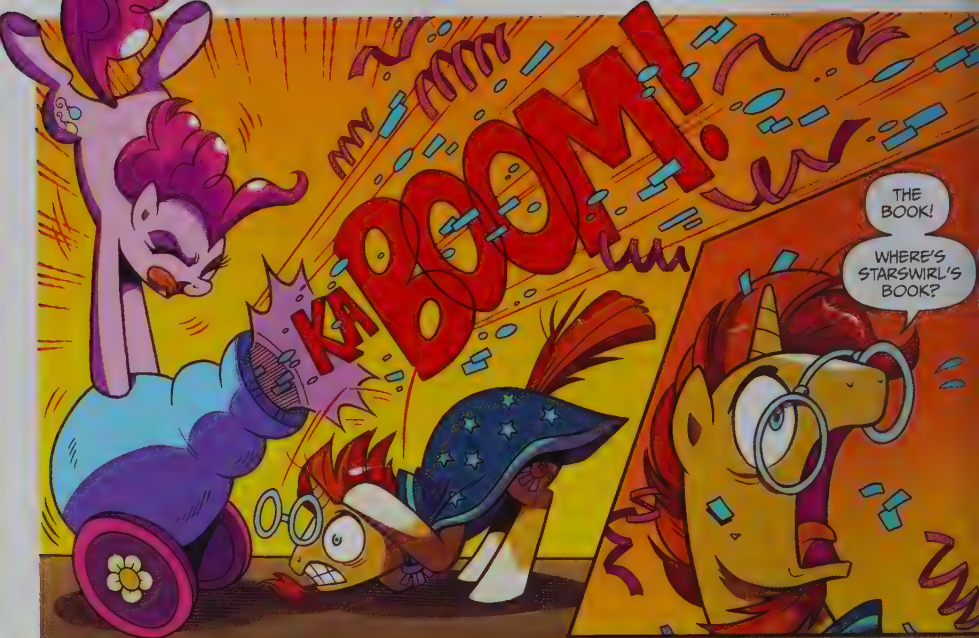


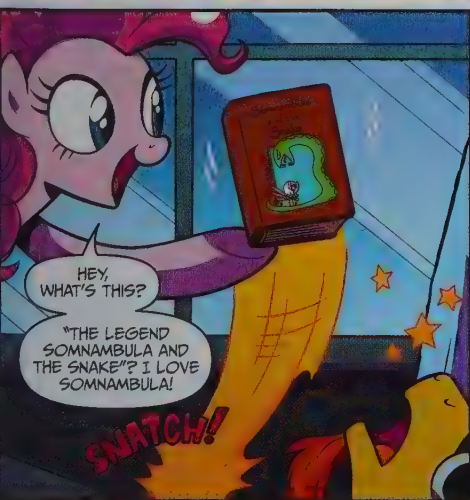
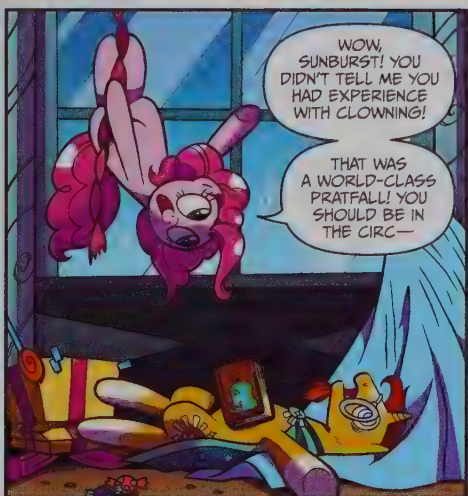
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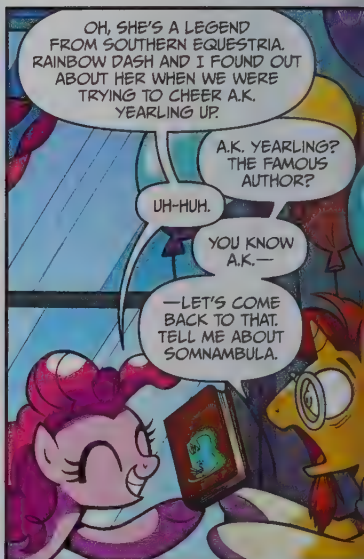


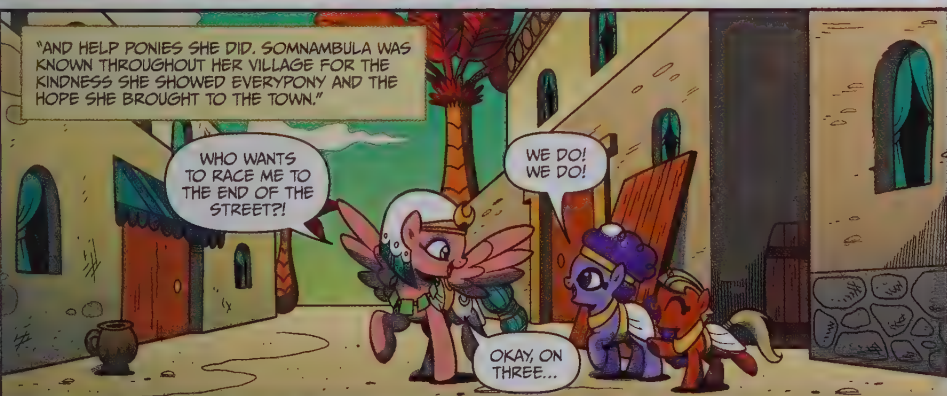
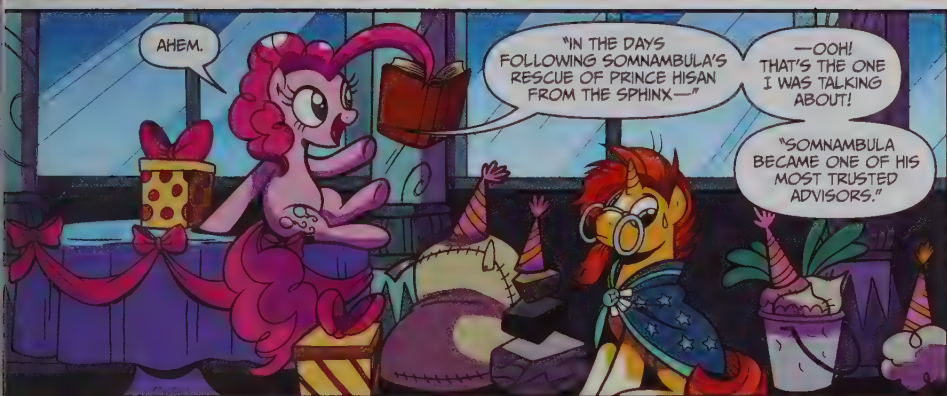
Brenda Hickey 2017













STAY BACK,
MEN! HE'S READY
TO STRIKE!

HSSSSSS

OH, NOW
I GET IT.





SO,
WHERE IS HE
FROM?

I DON'T
KNOW!

DO YOU
HAVE A
GUESS?

NOT
HERE.

HMMM...
YES, YOU
PROBABLY
WOULD HAVE
SEEN HIM
BEFORE IF HE
WAS FROM
HERE.



WHEN DID
HE SHOW
UP?

HE
SLITHERED INTO
TOWN ABOUT AN
HOUR AGO.

THEN
WHAT DID
HE DO?

TERORRIZED
THE WHOLE TOWN,
OBVIOUSLY!



KICK!

NOT AS FAR
AS I CAN TELL!
I DON'T SPEAK
SNAKE!

DID HE
SAY WHAT HE
WANTS?

GOOD POINT.
THAT WOULD BE
USEFUL, WOULDN'T
IT?

SOMNAMBULA!

NOD
NOD



YES?

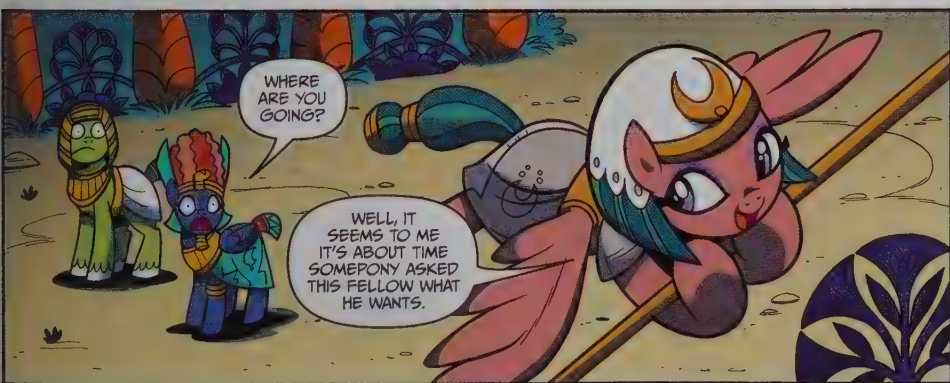
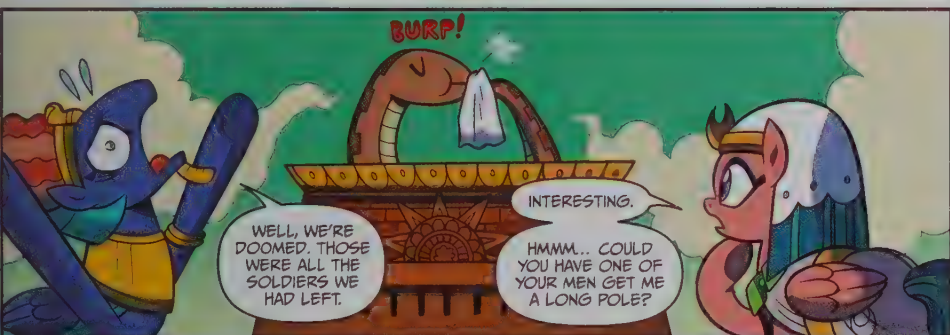
WHY ARE
YOU SO
CALM?

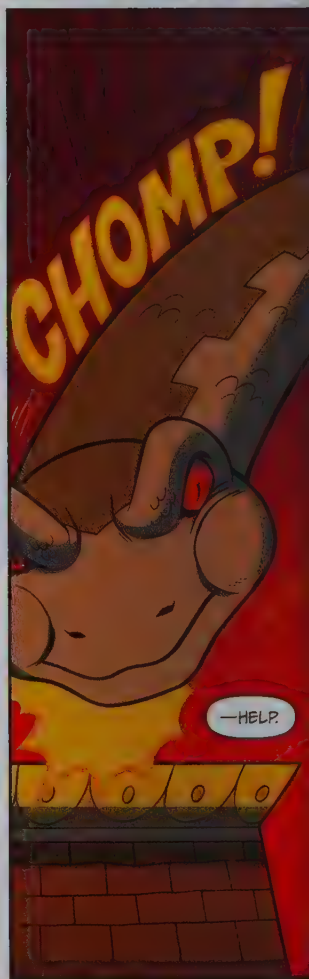
WELL,
HONESTLY,
WHAT GOOD DOES
PANICKING DO? IF WE
STAY CLEAR-HEADED
AND CONSIDER THE
SITUATION, WE'RE
MUCH MORE LIKELY
TO COME UP WITH
USEFUL IDEAS.

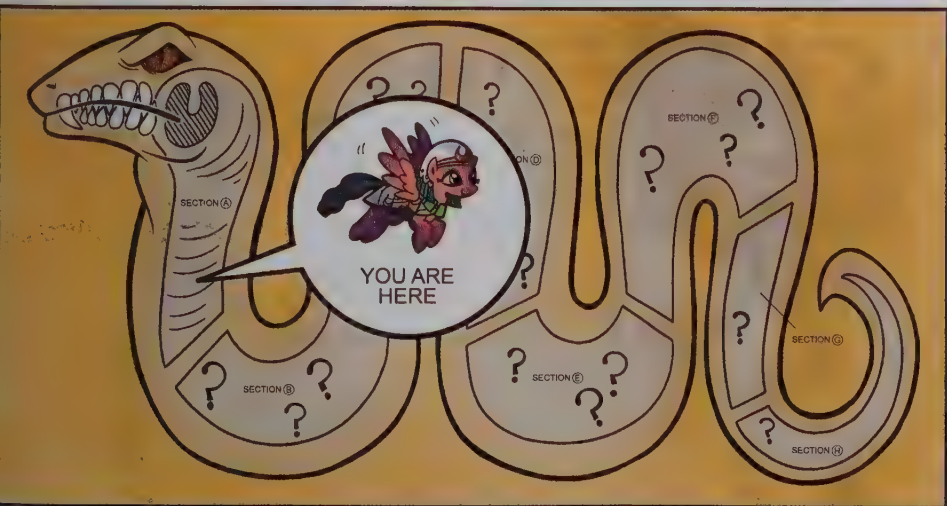
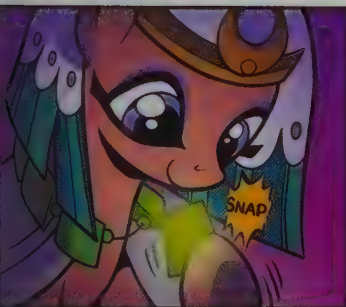
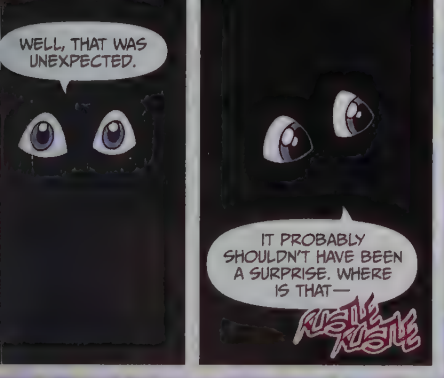


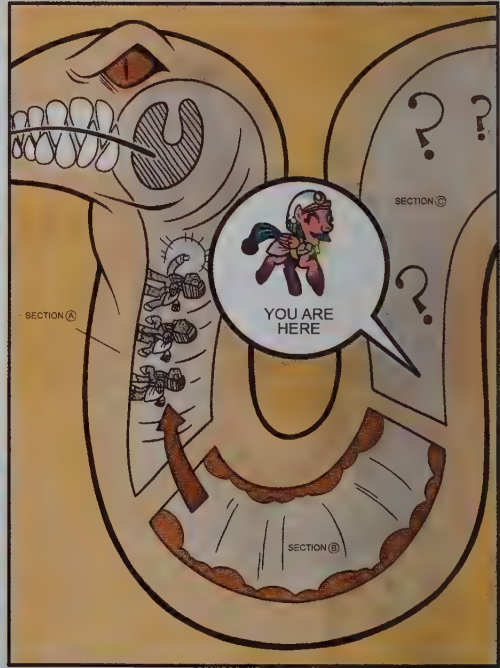
SOMNAMBULA,
THAT'S WHAT'S LEFT
OF OUR GUARD UP
THERE AND IF—

Hiss













SECTION (A)

SECTION (B)

SECTION (C)

SECTION (D)

SECTION (E)

SECTION (F)

SECTION (H)

SECTION (G)

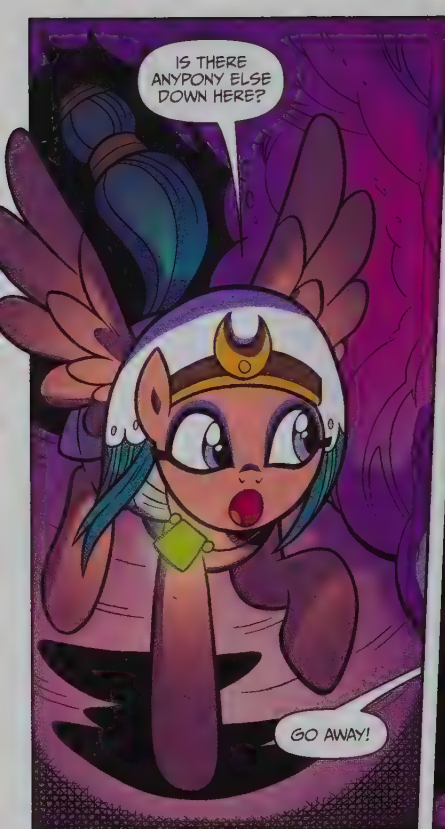
IT WAS
AS BIG AS A
HOUSE!

HMM...

AS BIG AS
A BEAR.

HMM...

HMMM...



IS THERE ANYPONY ELSE DOWN HERE?

GO AWAY!



COME ON NOW. I'M HERE TO HELP YOU.

YOU CAN'T HELP ME. NO ONE CAN HELP ME. I'M AN OLD FOOL.



OH, THERE YOU ARE. HEY, YOU LOOK LIKE A WIZARD!

WOW, IT'S NOT JUST YOUR NECKLACE, YOU ARE BRIGHT.



AREN'T YOU JUST A GRUMPY GUS.

WELL, IF YOU CREATED A GIANT SNAKE AND GOT YOURSELF EATEN, YOU WOULD BE TOO.

WAIT, YOU CREATED THIS SNAKE? HOW'D YOU DO THAT?



LEAVE ME ALONE. LET ME WALLOW IN MY FAILURE.

FAILURE? THIS IS AN AMAZING SPELL! WON'T YOU TELL ME HOW IT WORKS?

IT'S NOT AMAZING. IT WAS JUST FRUSTRATION.

"YOU WERE RIGHT THAT I WAS A WIZARD.
I WAS A GREAT POTION MAKER. BUT
UNFORTUNATELY, I HAD A PEST PROBLEM.

"THERE WAS THIS SNAKE THAT
KEPT EATING MY SUPPLIES.



"I WOULD TRY AND CATCH
HIM AND HE'D SLITHER
AWAY INTO THE WALLS.
SO, FINALLY I DECIDED
TO SET A TRAP.

"I CURSED A ROCK AND
LEFT IT WHERE HE COULD
FIND IT. IF HE ATE THE
ROCK, HE'D BE CURSED TO
GROW. THEN HE COULDN'T
SLITHER AWAY AND I COULD
FINALLY GET HIM OUT OF
THE HOUSE.

"SURE, IT WAS A PETTY
CURSE, BUT THE PUNISHMENT
FIT THE CRIME.

"SURE ENOUGH, THE
LITTLE GLUTTON ATE
THE ROCK.

"WHAT I DIDN'T COUNT ON
WAS THAT I HAD MADE THE
CURSE TOO POTENT.



"AND THE SPELL
MADE HIM KEEP
EXPANDING.



"AND NOW HE WAS
BLOCKING MY WAY
OUT OF MY HOME."

ANYWAY, I BET
YOU CAN FIGURE
OUT WHAT HAPPENED
THEN, AND NO
SOONER—

HEY,
WHERE ARE
YOU GOING?

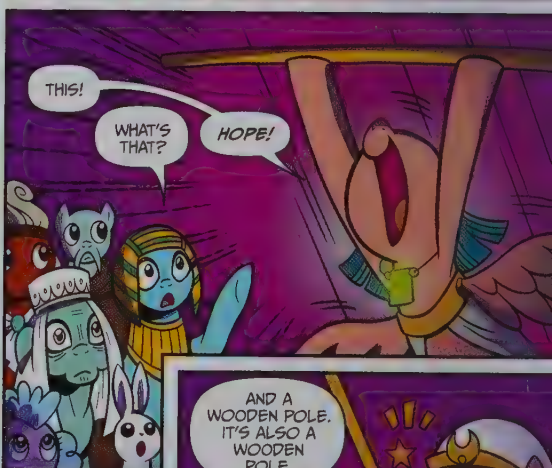
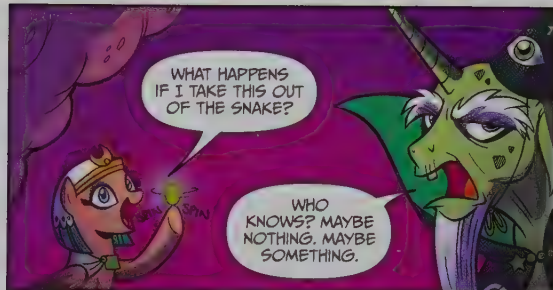
A ROCK, HUH?
WELL, THERE'S
NOT THAT MUCH
SNAKE LEFT.



DID IT
LOOK LIKE
THIS?

THAT'S
THE ONE, THE
LITTLE ROCK
THAT RUINED
MY LIFE.



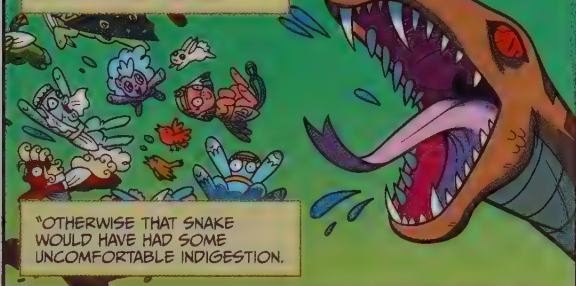


"AND JUST LIKE THAT, THE ROCK WAS OUT OF THE SNAKE AND THE CURSE WAS LIFTED."



"THE SNAKE SHRUNK DOWN RIGHT AWAY."

"LUCKILY, THE PONIES WERE ALL IN THE MOUTH AND COULD DIVE OUT ALL AT ONCE."



"OTHERWISE THAT SNAKE WOULD HAVE HAD SOME UNCOMFORTABLE INDIGESTION."

"AND SOMNAMBULA WAS THE HERO OF THE DAY."



"AND SHE DID IT WITHOUT ATTACKING, BUT BY KEEPING HOPE AND ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS."

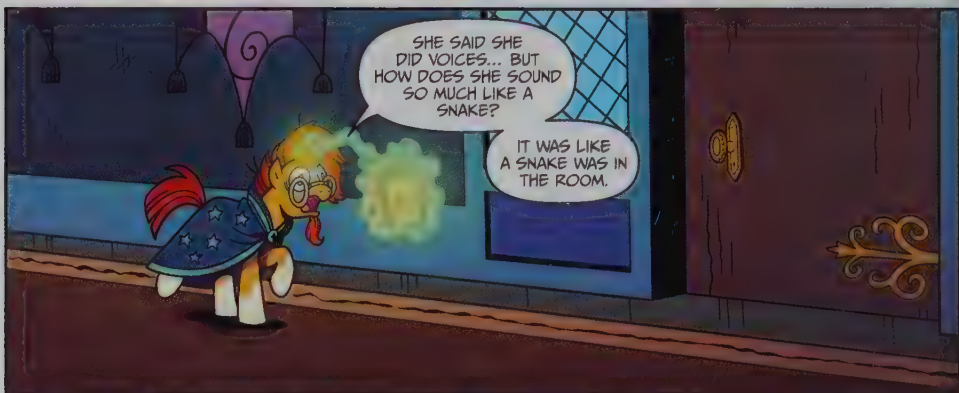
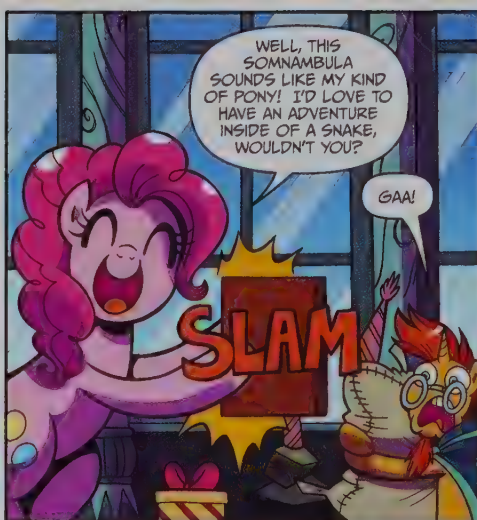
"AND THE PRINCE WAS VERY EXCITED TO SEE HIS ADVISOR STILL IN ONE PIECE. NOT TO MENTION HIS GUARDS."



"HE SWORE THAT NEXT TIME, NO MATTER HOW STRANGE SOMNAMBULA'S IDEAS SEEMED, HE WOULDN'T LOSE FAITH IN HER."

"AND HE WOULD NEVER LOSE HOPE."





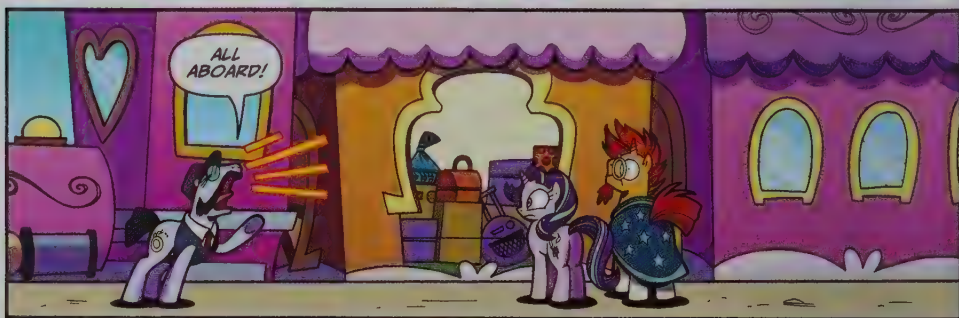
Art by Zachary Sterling



Art by Brenda Hickey









IN HER DAYS AFTER CURING THE SWAMP FEVER EPIDEMIC, MAGE MEADOWBROOK WENT ON THE ROAD TO HELP SICK PONIES EVERYWHERE.



MEADOWBROOK POLISHED OFF PONYPOX IN PUERTO CABALLO. SHE FOUGHT THE PHOENIX FEVER IN FILLYDELPHIA.

FINALLY, SHE HAD JUST CURED THE BLUE FLU IN SALT LICK CITY.

NO FEVER AT ALL. IS YOUR COAT USUALLY BLUE?



WELL, YEAH. BUT USUALLY IT'S MORE OF A CERULEAN, AND THIS IS DEFINITELY MORE OF A PERIWINKLE.

BUT DO YOU FEEL SICK?

ONLY WHEN I LOOK IN THE MIRROR! I MEAN... PERIWINKLE!



WELL, WHY DON'T YOU GIVE IT A FEW MORE DAYS AND THEN WASH WITH SHAMPOO? I'M SURE IT WILL GET BACK TO THE RIGHT SHADE OF BLUE.

IT BETTER! I'M NOT SURE I CAN LIVE THE REST OF MY LIFE AS A PERIWINKLE PONY.



WITH THE BLUE FLU CURED, MEADOWBROOK SET OUT ON THE ROAD AGAIN, LOOKING FOR PONIES IN NEED OF HELP.

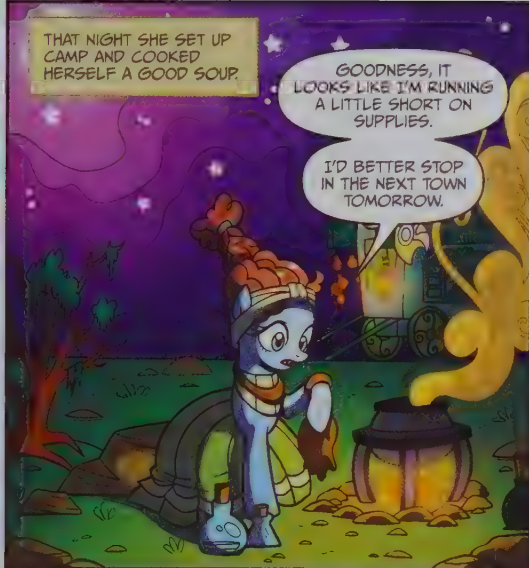
WITH HER LITTLE CART IN TOW, SHE TRAVELLED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE NEXT DAY.



THAT NIGHT SHE SET UP CAMP AND COOKED HERSELF A GOOD SOUP.

GOODNESS, IT LOOKS LIKE I'M RUNNING A LITTLE SHORT ON SUPPLIES.

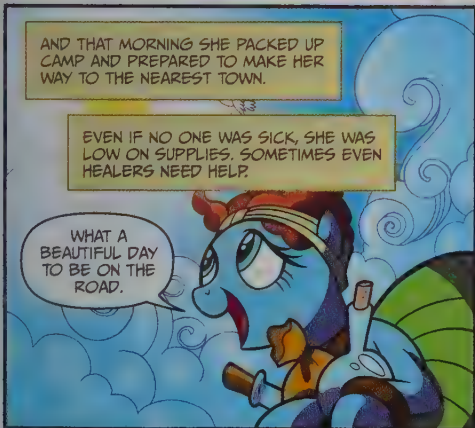
I'D BETTER STOP IN THE NEXT TOWN TOMORROW.



AND THAT MORNING SHE PACKED UP CAMP AND PREPARED TO MAKE HER WAY TO THE NEAREST TOWN.

EVEN IF NO ONE WAS SICK, SHE WAS LOW ON SUPPLIES. SOMETIMES EVEN HEALERS NEED HELP.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DAY TO BE ON THE ROAD.



BUT LUCK WAS NOT ON MEADOWBROOK'S SIDE, AND THAT DAY THE WEATHER TURNED BAD.

INSTEAD OF MOVING AT A STEADY TROT, MEADOWBROOK GALLOPED ON TO FIND THE NEAREST TOWN.

AWWWW, FIDDLESTICKS!



LATE THAT AFTERNOON, MEADOWBROOK FINALLY PASSED A SIGNPOST ON THE WAY INTO A SMALL TOWN.

SHE GALLOPED QUICKLY INTO THE TOWN OF MAREIDIAN.

FINALLY! I CAN'T WAIT TO GET SOMEWHERE WARM!



PERHAPS SHE GALLOPED A LITTLE TOO QUICKLY.

MAREIDIAN

ANGER
DO NOT
ENTER!





HOWEVER, BY THE TIME MEADOWBROOK REALIZED SOMETHING WAS STRANGE, SHE HAD ALREADY REACHED THE TOWN SQUARE.

A TOWN SQUARE WITHOUT A SINGLE PONY IN SIGHT.



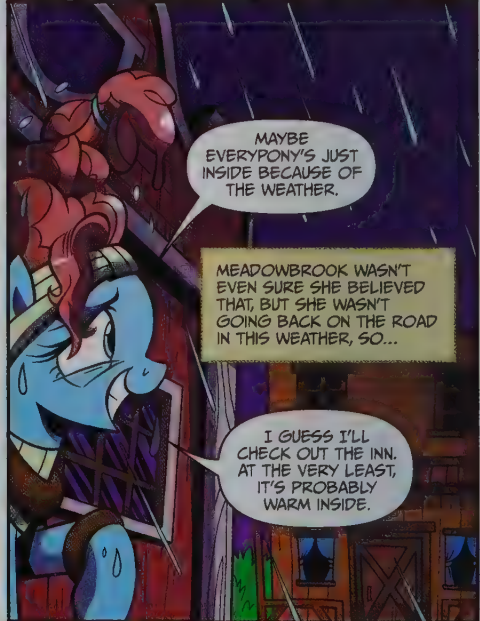
HELLO?
IS ANYPONY
THERE?

NO PONY ANSWERED. IN FACT, OTHER THAN THE POUNDING RAIN ON THE ROOFTOPS, MEADOWBROOK COULDN'T HEAR ANYTHING.



THIS IS
CREEPY.

IT WAS.



MAYBE
EVERYPONY'S JUST
INSIDE BECAUSE OF
THE WEATHER.

MEADOWBROOK WASN'T EVEN SURE SHE BELIEVED THAT, BUT SHE WASN'T GOING BACK ON THE ROAD IN THIS WEATHER, SO...

I GUESS I'LL
CHECK OUT THE INN.
AT THE VERY LEAST,
IT'S PROBABLY
WARM INSIDE.



I'LL JUST LEAVE THIS RIGHT OUT HERE. NOT LIKE I'LL NEED A WAGON FULL OF MEDICINE IN THE INN.

MEADOWBROOK WAS NERVOUS. SHE COULD TELL SOMETHING WASN'T RIGHT, BUT NOTHING SEEMED OUT OF PLACE.

IT JUST SEEMED... QUIET.



MEADOWBROOK OPENED THE DOOR TO THE INN, GLAD TO FINALLY BE GETTING OUT OF THE RAIN.



BUT SHE WAS IN FOR A SURPRISE.

HUH, IT'S DARK. THE INN MUST BE CLOSED OR SOMETHING.

WELL, I'M SURE NO PONY WILL MIND IF I STAY IN HERE UNTIL THE WEATHER CLEARS UP.

IN A SENSE, SHE WAS RIGHT.



JUST GRAB THIS LITTLE FELLA TO KEEP ME COMPANY.



NOW, LET'S GET A LOOK AND SEE EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH.



AAAAH
AAAAH

THE STRANGE PONIES
WERE EVERYWHERE
THERE IN THE DARK.

THANKFULLY, THEY
DIDN'T SEEM TO NOTICE
MEADOWBROOK, SO AS
LONG AS SHE DIDN'T—



ZOMBIES POURED FROM EVERY DOOR,
BUT FOR A MOMENT MEADOWBROOK
WASN'T FOCUSED ON THEM.

MY PACK!

SHE WAS FOCUSED ON THE ONLY
TOOLS SHE HAD THAT COULD
GET HER OUT OF THIS JAM.

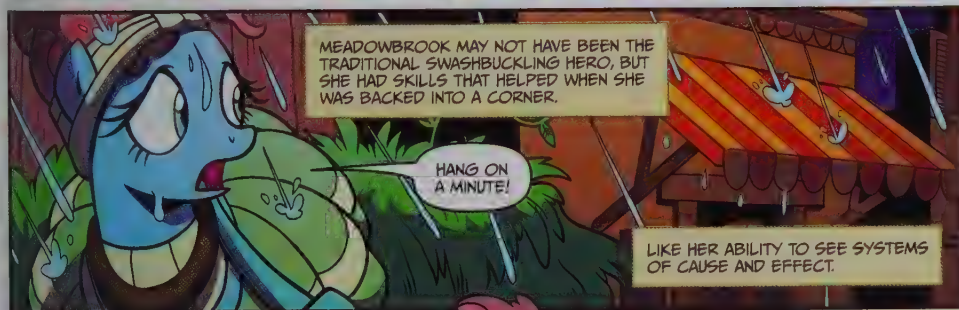
THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG WITH
THESE PONIES, AND MEADOWBROOK KNEW
SHE COULDN'T LET THEM TOUCH HER OR
SHE MIGHT CATCH WHAT THEY HAD.

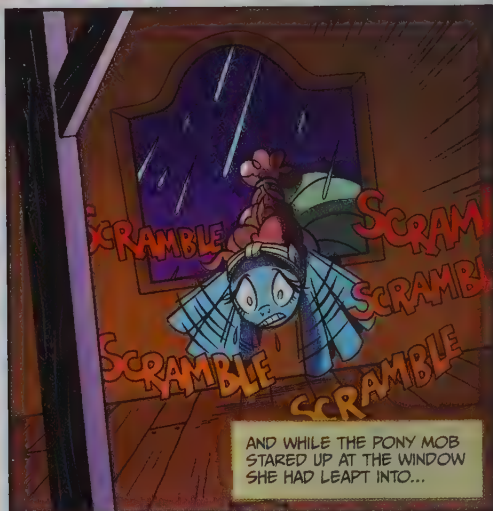
BUT IF SHE ABANDONED HER PACK,
SHE WOULD HAVE NO CHANCE OF CURING
WHATEVER WAS WRONG WITH THEM.

GOT IT!

AND MEADOWBROOK
DIDN'T BECOME A HEALER
SO SHE COULD ABANDON
PONIES IN NEED.

THEN AGAIN, SHE DIDN'T
BECOME A HEALER TO
END UP A ZOMBIE EITHER.







WELL,
SO LONG,
CREEPIES!



BLURP

GAH
AH!!



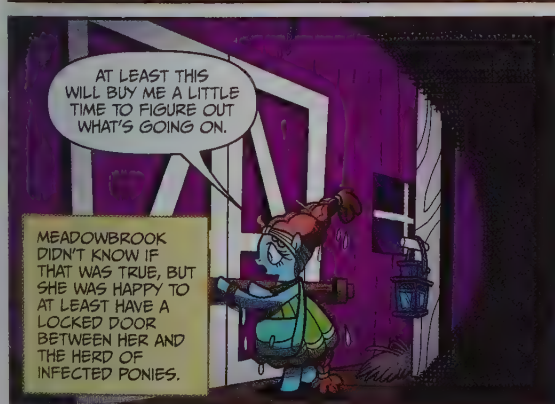
WELL, "ESCAPED" MIGHT
NOT BE THE RIGHT WORD.

GREAT! NOW
THEY'RE ALL AFTER
ME AGAIN.

GOT A HEAD START
IS MORE LIKE IT.



AND MEADOWBROOK USED THAT HEAD START
TO MAKE HER WAY TO A LARGE RED BARN
SHE FOUND AT THE EDGE OF TOWN.



AT LEAST THIS
WILL BUY ME A LITTLE
TIME TO FIGURE OUT
WHAT'S GOING ON.

MEADOWBROOK
DIDN'T KNOW IF
THAT WAS TRUE, BUT
SHE WAS HAPPY TO
AT LEAST HAVE A
LOCKED DOOR
BETWEEN HER AND
THE HERD OF
INFECTED PONIES.



NOW, LET'S
HAVE A LITTLE
LIGHT.

AND FOR THE SECOND TIME THAT
DAY, MEADOWBROOK LIT A LANTERN
AND FOUND SOMETHING SHE HAD
NOT EXPECTED TO SEE.



FROGS?



HEY THERE, LITTLE GUY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN A BARN?

YOU GUYS SHOULD BE STAYING IN THE SWAMP UNLESS YOU FIND...



...A FOOD SOURCE.

THIS MUST BE THE OAT STORES FOR THE WHOLE TOWN.

AND YOU'RE A NILSON SWAMP FROG!

NOM NOM

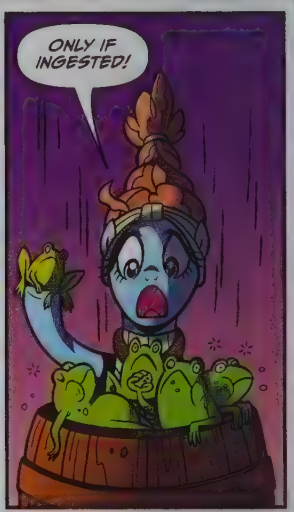
NOM

YOU'RE BRIGHTLY COLORED SO YOU CAN WARN PREDATORS THE EXCRETION ON YOUR SKIN IS POISONOUS.



BUT...

YES?



ONLY IF INGESTED!



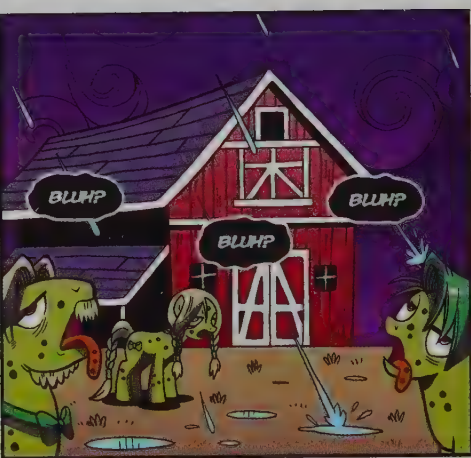
WHICH WOULDN'T NORMALLY BE A PROBLEM BECAUSE A PONY WOULDN'T EAT YOU.

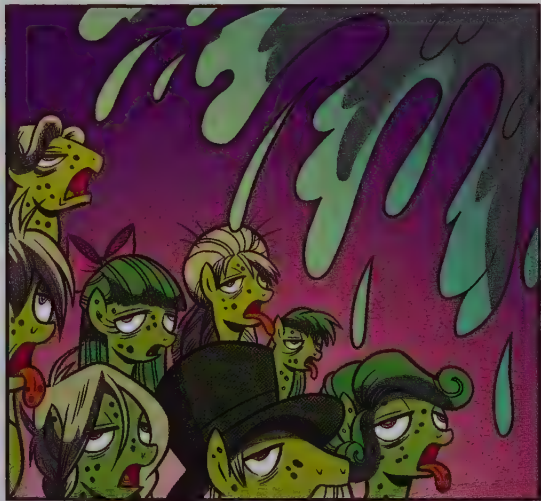
BUT THEY DO EAT OATS!



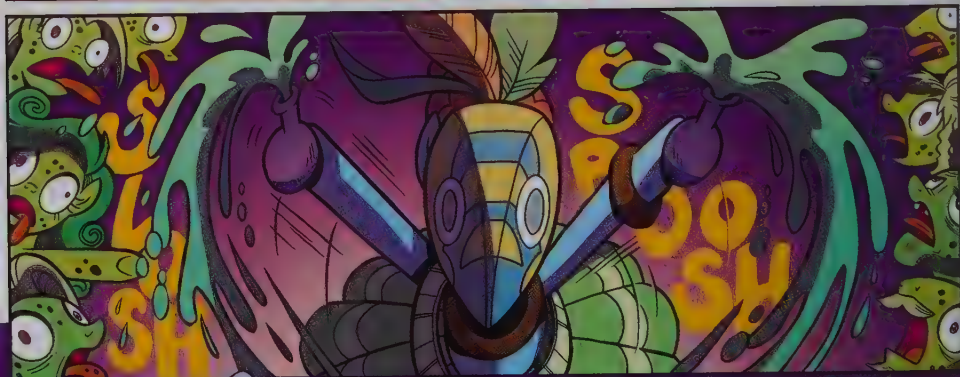
I CAN FIX THIS!







[funky ninja action music]
♪♪♪



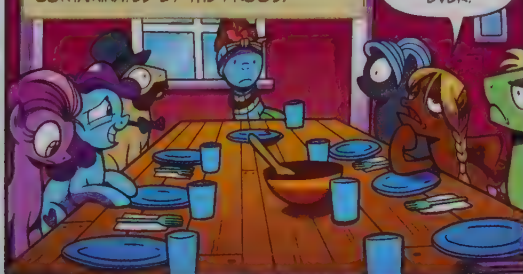
AND AS ALL OF THE PONIES FINALLY CAME TO THEIR SENSES, THEY REALIZED THAT MEADOWBROOK WAS THEIR HERO.

THEY DECIDED TO THROW HER A HERO'S FEAST.



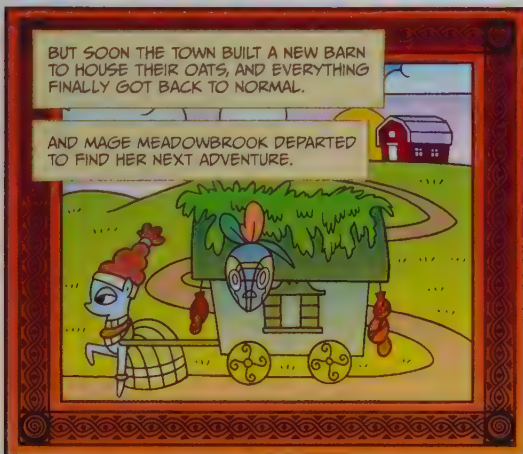
WHICH, SADLY, DID NOT HAVE ANY FOOD AT IT, AS MEADOWBROOK INFORMED THEM THAT THEIR OATS HAD BEEN CONTAMINATED BY THE FROGS.

THIS IS THE WORST FEAST EVER.



BUT SOON THE TOWN BUILT A NEW BARN TO HOUSE THEIR OATS, AND EVERYTHING FINALLY GOT BACK TO NORMAL.

AND MAGE MEADOWBROOK DEPARTED TO FIND HER NEXT ADVENTURE.



YOU KNOW, I WAS WITH IT UNTIL THE HEALER SUDDENLY TURNED INTO A NINJA AT THE END THERE.

I DON'T THINK THAT STARSWHirl REALLY KNOWS WHAT A HEALER—





Art by Zachary Sterling



Art by Tony Fleecs



"I HAVE SO MUCH
REORGANIZING
TO DO!"

I HAD ALL OF
THESE STORIES
SORTED, BUT
NOW...

...I HAVE
TO RESORT
EVERYTHING!
NOW THAT I
KNOW...

...I DON'T EVEN
KNOW WHAT I KNOW.
THERE'S SO MUCH
WORK TO DO.

I JUST NEED
TO CALM DOWN
AND BREATHE
DEEP AND—

—ALL OF
MY NOTES ARE
WRONG!

**KNOCK
KNOCK**

GREAT, AND NOW
I'M ABOUT TO BE
INTERRUPTED AND
HAVE TO START
OVER!



HELLO?



OH, WHAT'S THIS?

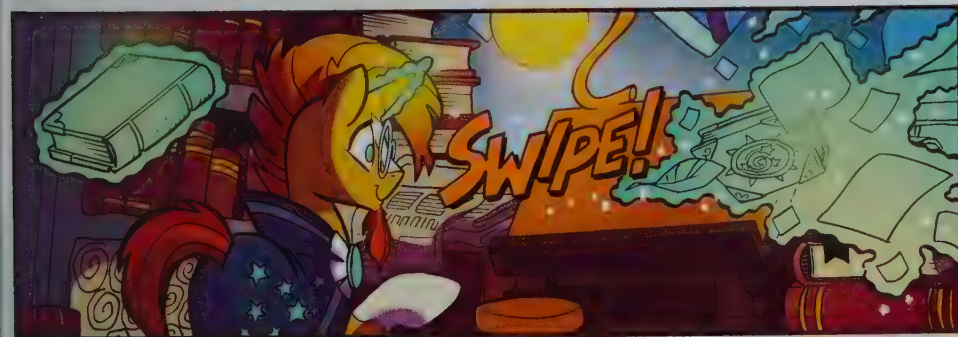


A PRESENT?
WHO COULD THIS
BE FROM?



ANOTHER BOOK?
WELL, THIS WILL CERTAINLY
MAKE IT EASIER TO
ORGANIZE MY—

—WAIT
A MINUTE.
THIS IS...



This is a tale of the
heroes of Equestria.

However, there is one very important
thing to remember about me.

This
hero
how
the
Ho
ve
re

I am not a hero.

LET'S SEE
HERE. THESE SHELLS
DISPLAY A SYMMETRICAL
PATTERN SIMILAR TO THE
ONES I FOUND ON
THURSDAY.

I have never had
any special powers.
I've never really
been noteworthy
for any reason.

I am a scholar.

INTERESTING! THE
OUTSIDE OF THE SHELL IS
POROUS, AND IT FEELS LIKE
IT'S BEEN SMOOTHED
OVER TIME.

And at the time of this
story, I had chosen to
study sea creatures.

EVIDENCE SUGGESTS
THAT THESE SHELLS MIGHT
BE HUNDREDS OF YEARS OLD.
CERTAINLY PROOF THAT THERE
ARE THINGS IN THE SEA
PONYKIND HAS ONLY
DREAMED OF.

It was a very fascinating subject
to me. So much was never seen.
So much was hidden.

What sort of mysteries
hid in the ocean?

OFF WITH
THE SUNRISE ON A
FRESH DAY'S NEW
ADVENTURE.

Every morning, I woke up at the crack of dawn. I liked to get to the beaches before other ponies had trampled them.

It was fall and soon to be winter,
so I had to dress warmly.

So I'd throw on my trusty jacket and
head down to find what fresh samples
the tide had brought in.

BRRRR.

OH, THIS
ONE COULD BE
INTERESTING.

I wasn't sure exactly what I was out
to find, I only knew that last summer
I had been collecting folktales and
legends from around Equestria...

...and while I loved the
legends of heroes, great
ponies like Rockhoof,
and Mistmane, and
Flash Magnus...

FASCINATING
PATTERNS! THIS IS
CERTAINLY A NEW
SPECIES!

...What really fascinated me
were the tales of mystical
sea ponies. There was no
evidence they existed, but
there were so many stories.

I'LL HAVE TO
STUDY YOU LATER.
THIS COULD BE THE
GREAT FIND OF—

EXCUSE
ME, SIR.

YES?

And when all of the
legends start to agree—

WE'RE LOST.
DO YOU THINK YOU
COULD HELP
US?

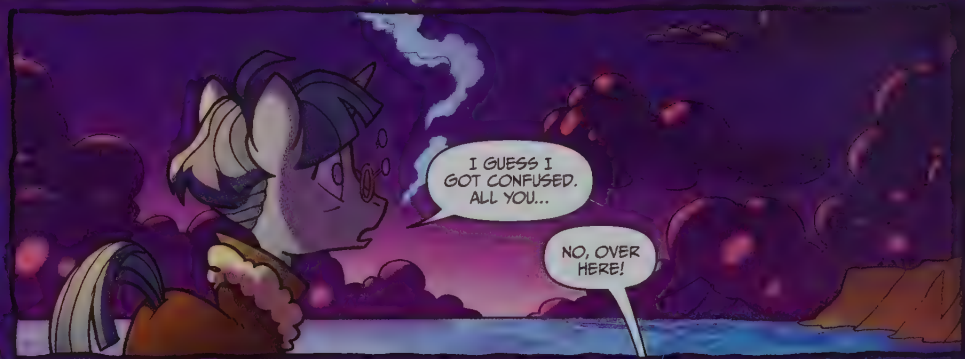
WELL,
CERTAINLY, ALL
YOU—



OH!
HELLO?

HMM...

OVER
HERE.



I GUESS I
GOT CONFUSED.
ALL YOU...

NO, OVER
HERE!



When all the folktales
agree, there has to be
something to it.

OH MY.

YES, THERE
YOU GO.



And just like that, I had gone
from studying folklore...

WHAT ARE
YOU?

US?

...to being part of it.

MY NAME'S
ADAGIO. THIS
IS SONATA AND
ARIA. WE'RE THE
DAZZLINGS.



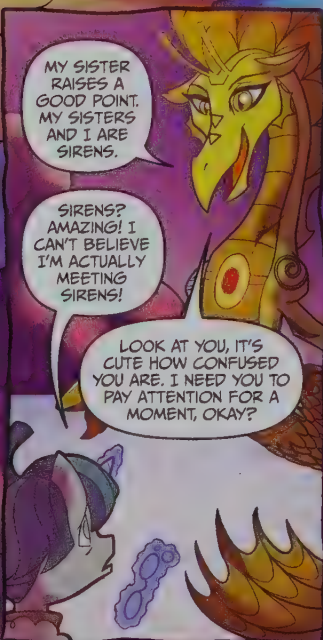


DAZZLING? WHAT'S A DAZDLING?

WHAT A SHAME.

"WHAT'S A DAZDLING?" SEE, GIRLS, HE HASN'T EVEN HEARD OF US.

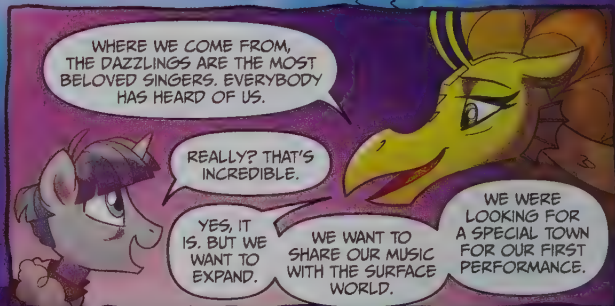
WELL, THAT IS WHY WE'RE HERE, ISN'T IT?



MY SISTER RAISES A GOOD POINT. MY SISTERS AND I ARE SIRENS.

SIRENS? AMAZING! I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M ACTUALLY MEETING SIRENS!

LOOK AT YOU, IT'S CUTE HOW CONFUSED YOU ARE. I NEED YOU TO PAY ATTENTION FOR A MOMENT, OKAY?



WHERE WE COME FROM, THE DAZDLINGS ARE THE MOST BELOVED SINGERS. EVERYBODY HAS HEARD OF US.

REALLY? THAT'S INCREDIBLE.

YES, IT IS. BUT WE WANT TO EXPAND.

WE WANT TO SHARE OUR MUSIC WITH THE SURFACE WORLD.

WE WERE LOOKING FOR A SPECIAL TOWN FOR OUR FIRST PERFORMANCE.



YOU DON'T KNOW A TOWN NEARBY THAT WOULD WANT TO HOST OUR FIRST CONCERT, DO YOU?

WELL, I REALLY DON'T THINK MY TOWN WOULD—



WHY NOT?!

GAH!



YOUR LITTLE
PODUNK COASTAL
TOWN WOULD
BE **BLESSED** TO
POWER US!

POWER
YOU?



SISTER.

AHEM.



I'M SO SORRY I
GET PASSIONATE ABOUT
THESE THINGS. TRUE
ARTISTS HAVE TEMPER,
YOU KNOW?

BUT YOU WOULD
LOVE TO HELP US SET
UP A CONCERT AT YOUR
TOWN, WOULDN'T
YOU?

WHAT DID
YOU MEAN
"POWER
US"?



YOU MUST HAVE
MISHEARD ME. I
DIDN'T SAY THAT, DID
I SISTERS?

NOT THAT
I HEARD.

HE MUST BE
CONFUSED.



YOU'LL GO FIND
US A CROWD FOR OUR
CONCERT, WON'T YOU,
NEW FRIEND? IT NEEDS TO
BE EVERYPONY IN YOUR
TOWN. **EVERYPONY**,
GOT IT?

I... DON'T
KNOW. I NEED TO
GO. I HAVE... UHHH...
RESPONSIBILITIES.



COME
BACK HERE
YOU—

YOU JUST
CAN'T FIND GOOD
HELP THESE DAYS.
COME ON, GIRLS,
LET'S FIND A NEW
PATSY.

My heart was beating like crazy.

I had never been so excited... or so scared.



I had barely read anything about sirens. I thought they might not even be real.

EXCUSE ME!

But I knew for sure that I had one book that had mentioned them. I needed to get back to my home.

Adagio had been very insistent about getting ponies to them. What did she want with them?

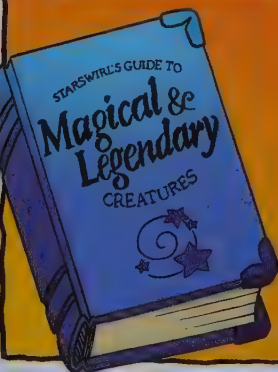
The concert was obviously a cover for something else. What did she have planned?



HERE IT IS!

A book from my hero, Starswirl the Bearded.

If anyone could tell me what Adagio was up to, it was Starswirl.



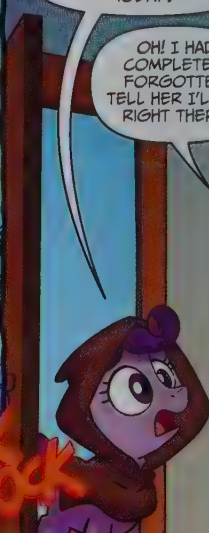
Even Starswirl's knowledge was limited. It seemed that even he hadn't met a siren yet.

But he seemed to think they were bad news and thrived on others' negative energy.



EXCUSE ME, SIR. MS. MALUS SAYS YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO COME HELP HER WITH HER CHORES TODAY?

OH! I HAD COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN! TELL HER I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.



KNOCK KNOCK

Ms. Malus was an old pony who lived out past the edge of town.

She grew fruit trees that supplied food for the town, but she lived alone, so the rest of the town did their best to help out when she needed it.

IT'S ABOUT TIME!

YOU SEE THOSE TREES OVER THERE? WELL, I DON'T RIGHTLY KNOW WHAT YOU CALL 'EM, BUT IN A FEW WEEKS THEIR FRUIT'S GOING TO BE RIPE, AND I'M GONNA NEED TO HARVEST 'EM.

IN A FEW WEEKS? BUT WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO TONIGHT?

LISTEN HERE! EVERYTHING MAY JUST COME TO YOU EASILY, BUT AN OLD LADY LIKE ME HAS TO PLAN.

IF I'M GOING TO SPEND ALL THAT TIME HARVESTING THAT MYSTERY FRUIT, THEN I GOTTA GET ALL THE CHORES IN THE HOUSE DONE AHEAD OF TIME.

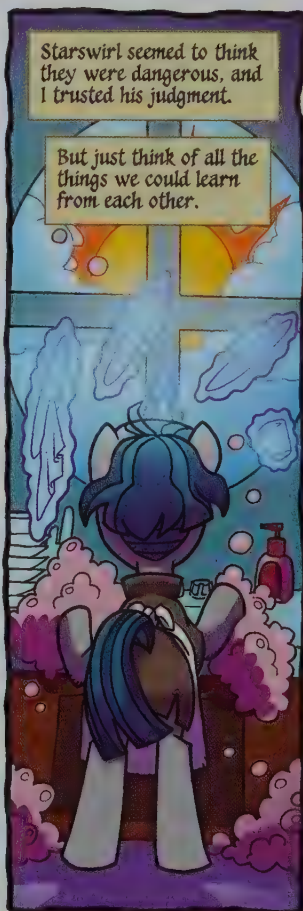
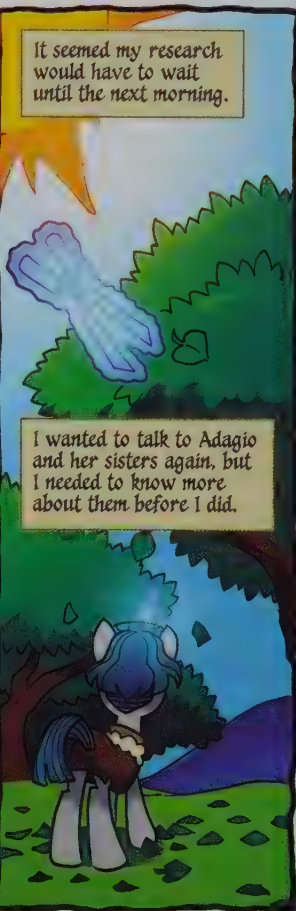
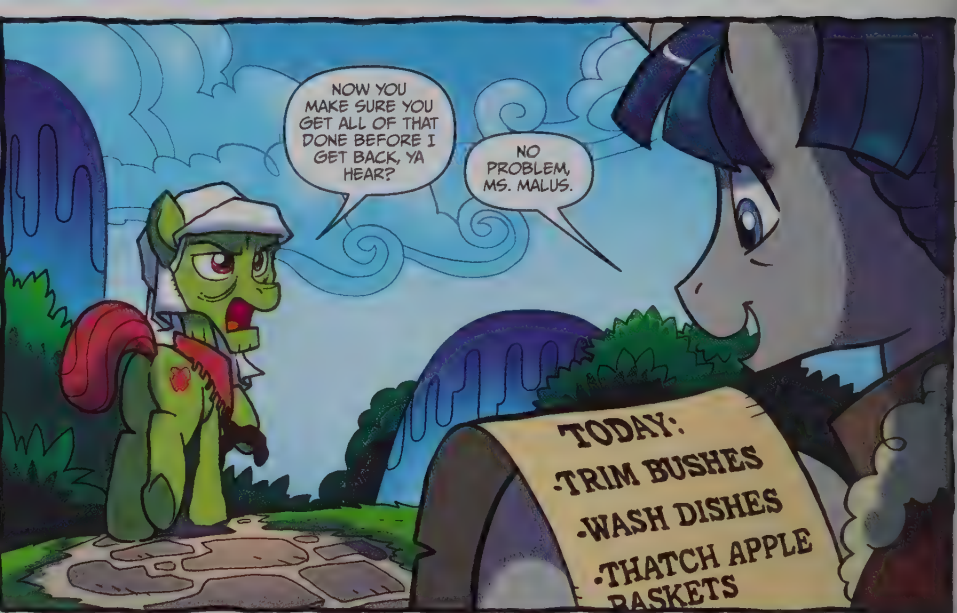
I'VE GOT IT ALL SET OUT RIGHT HERE. I SCHEDULED WHICH CHORES HAVE TO GET DONE IN ORDER TO BE READY, AND I CAN'T MISS ONE!

WOW. THAT'S ORGANIZATION!

YOU'RE DARN TOOTIN', AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO THROW IT OFF BECAUSE SOME YOUNG BUCK CAN'T SHOW UP ON TIME.

I'M SO SORRY. WHERE DO WE START?

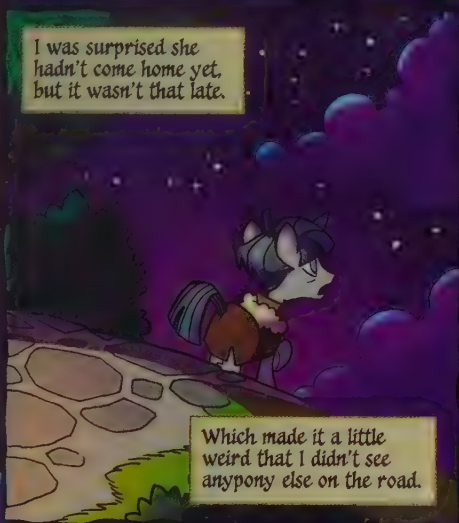
WE? I'VE GOT PLANS! BUT YOU CAN WORK ON THAT LIST FOR TODAY.



Finally, not long after the sun had completely set, I finished the last of Ms. Malus' chores and headed home.

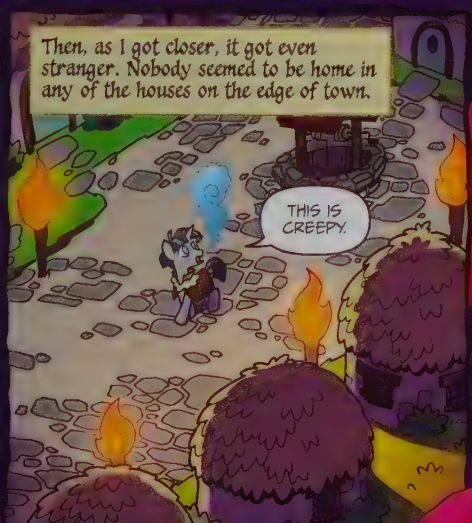


I was surprised she hadn't come home yet, but it wasn't that late.



Which made it a little weird that I didn't see anypony else on the road.

Then, as I got closer, it got even stranger. Nobody seemed to be home in any of the houses on the edge of town.



That was about the time I started to see the lights in the sky.

WHAT'S THAT?



I didn't know what they were, but for some reason they filled me with dread, so I walked toward the overlook into the town.

And that was when I realized I was too late.





From where I was standing, I could barely hear the music, which is probably the only thing that saved me.



The sirens hypnotized the ponies with their song, absorbing their magic.

And I could see my village weakening before my very eyes.



I didn't know what to do, so I did the same thing I always do.

I went to get my books.



I had to keep my ears covered, or I knew even I would end up like the rest of my friends.

But finally, I got back to my house.

THIS IS
ALL MY
FAULT!

I know now that it was silly
to blame myself. There was
no way I could have stopped
the Dazzlings.

But maybe I could have
warned everypony and...

I don't know...
something.



I HAVE TO
DO SOMETHING. I
HAVE TO FREE MY
FRIENDS.

But what could I do? I
wasn't particularly good
at magic. I wasn't strong.

The only thing I was ever
really good at was—



—studying.

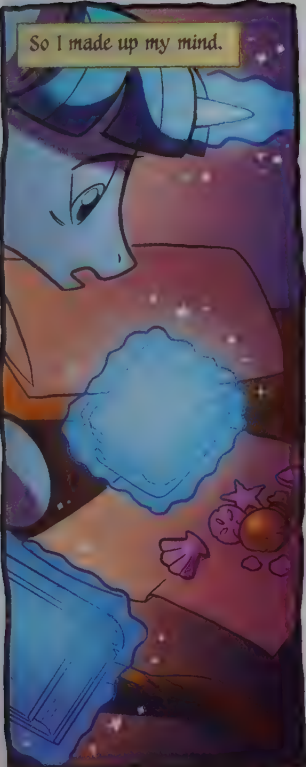


THAT'S IT!
I'M NOT A HERO,
BUT I KNOW
ALL OF THEIR
LEGENDS!



AND IF THE
LEGENDS ABOUT THE
SIRENS ARE REAL, THEN
MAYBE SO ARE SOME OF
THESE LEGENDS ABOUT
HEROES!





So I made up my mind.



If I couldn't do anything
to save my town—

I would find heroes
who could.



And with the power the
sirens had and the number
of ponies at their command—



—I doubted one hero
would be enough.

I would need to find a team of
heroes from around Equestria.

And after scouring my book, I thought
I had found just the ponies to do it.



Unfortunately, making the list was the easy part.

I would need to brave the untamed wilds of the world.

I would need to face the nightmarish creatures that only heroes dared to challenge.

I would have to dodge razor sharp claws and beaks.

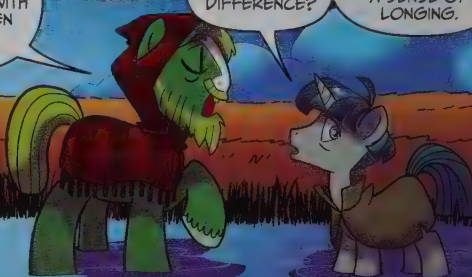
I would occasionally have to ask for directions.

WELL, YOU'RE GONNA HEAD DOWN THIS ROAD TILL YOU GET TO THE FIELD WITH THE SAD COW, THEN YOU'RE GONNA TURN RIGHT.

NOW MIND, IF YOU GET TO THE MELANCHOLY COW, YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR.

HOW WILL I KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

THE SAD ONE SEEMS LIKE HE'S GIVEN UP WHEREAS THE MELANCHOLY ONE HAS MORE OF A SENSE OF LONGING.



But finally, after weeks of travel, it would pay off.

I THINK
THIS IS IT!

THIS IS IT!
THERE'S THE
VOLCANO!



MAYBE
ONE OF THEM
KNOWS WHERE
I CAN FIND
HIM.

EXCUSE
ME!

MA'AM! I WAS
WONDERING IF
YOU COULD—

IS THERE
SOMETHING
GOING ON?

HE—

AAAAH!

THIS IS NOT
GOING AS I'D
HOPED.

NOW, INSIDE
OF A HOLE IS
NO PLACE FOR
A PONY TO
BE.



GRAB HOLD
OF MY SHOVEL
AND LET'S GET YOU
OUT OF THERE.

Art by Brenda Hickey



Art by Tony Fleecs



FAR IN THE NORTHERN
LANDS OF EQUESTRIA
THERE IS A VOLCANO.

AND AT THE BASE OF THIS VOLCANO
IS A TOWN FULL OF THE HEARTIEST
EARTH PONIES.

AND THIS TOWN IS PROTECTED
BY A TEAM OF THE STRONGEST
PONIES IN ALL OF EQUESTRIA.
THEY ARE KNOWN AS:

THE MIGHTY HELM

AND AMONG THEIR NUMBER IS
ONE OF THE MOST LEGENDARY
PONIES IN ALL OF EQUESTRIA.

THE EARTH PONY WITH MUSCLE
AS TOUGH AS ROCK. THE PONY
THEY SAY WASN'T BORN, BUT CUT
FROM THE ROCK OF THE VERY
MOUNTAIN. THE STRONGEST
PONY IN EQUESTRIA.

FOLK TALES TELL HOW
ROCKHOOF SINGLE-HOOFEDLY
SAVED THE VILLAGE.

WHEN THE VOLCANO
ERUPTED, HE DUG A
TRENCH TO CONTAIN
THE LAVA FLOW.

WITH HIS TRUSTY
SHOVEL, THERE WAS
NO CHALLENGE HE
COULD NOT FACE.



EVEN GETTING A CLUMSY
UNICORN OUT OF A DITCH.

ALMOST
THERE, FRIEND.
YOU'VE GOT
IT.

GAH! DON'T
LET GO! I THINK
I'M SLIPPING!
I—

WHEW! I THOUGHT I
WAS STUCK DOWN THERE!
IT WAS GOING TO TAKE
THEM WEEKS TO DIG
ME OUT.

I DON'T KNOW
ABOUT THAT. IT ONLY
TOOK ME A DAY
TO DIG IT.

IT ONLY TOOK
YOU A DAY TO DIG
A HOLE THAT
BIG?

NOT
THE HOLE,
FRIEND—

—THE WHOLE
TRENCH.

WOW!

YOU SEE, THE
VOLCANO'S BEEN A BIT
NOISY OF LATE AND INSTEAD
OF WAITING UNTIL THE LAST
MINUTE, I THOUGHT I'D GET
STARTED ON PROTECTING
THE VILLAGE WHILE WE
WERE WAITING.

WELL, FRIEND,
WATCH YOUR STEP.
YOU'D HATE TO BE IN
THERE WHEN THE
LAVA FILLS IT.

BE
WELL.

HOLD ON
A SECOND!
WAIT!

YOU'RE
HIM, AREN'T
YOU?

WHO'S THAT
NOW?



YOU'RE THE
HERO OF THE MIGHTY
HELM. YOU SAVED THIS
WHOLE VILLAGE.

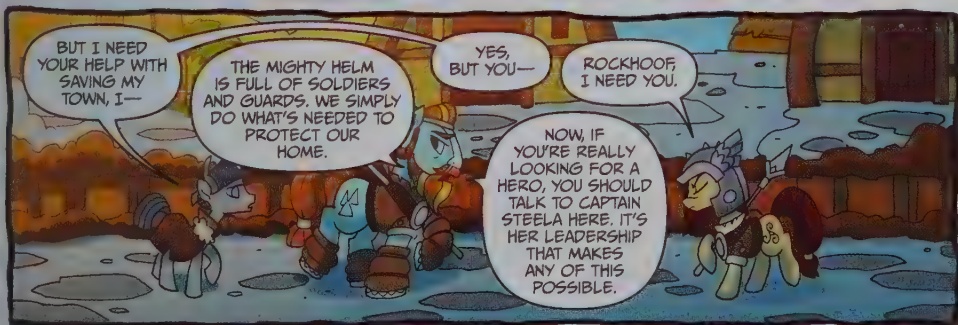
YOU'RE
ROCKHOOF!



HEH HEH HEH...
IS THAT WHAT
THEY'RE SAYING
NOW?

YOU'RE
NOT?

AYE, I AM
ROCKHOOF. IT'S
JUST THE HERO PART
I'M NOT SURE
ABOUT.



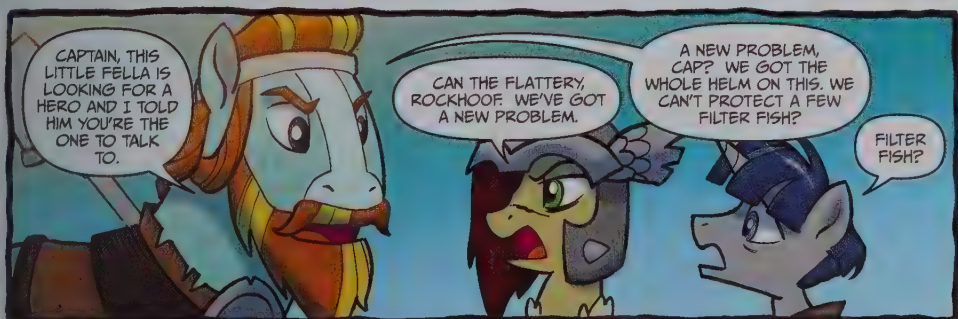
BUT I NEED
YOUR HELP WITH
SAVING MY
TOWN, I—

THE MIGHTY HELM
IS FULL OF SOLDIERS
AND GUARDS. WE SIMPLY
DO WHAT'S NEEDED TO
PROTECT OUR
HOME.

YES,
BUT YOU—

ROCKHOOF,
I NEED YOU.

NOW, IF
YOU'RE REALLY
LOOKING FOR A
HERO, YOU SHOULD
TALK TO CAPTAIN
STEELE HERE. IT'S
HER LEADERSHIP
THAT MAKES
ANY OF THIS
POSSIBLE.



CAPTAIN, THIS
LITTLE FELLA IS
LOOKING FOR A
HERO AND I TOLD
HIM YOU'RE THE
ONE TO TALK
TO.

CAN THE FLATTERY,
ROCKHOOF. WE'VE GOT
A NEW PROBLEM.

A NEW PROBLEM,
CAP? WE GOT THE
WHOLE HELM ON THIS. WE
CAN'T PROTECT A FEW
FILTER FISH?

FILTER
FISH?



MAGICAL FISH THAT KEEP OUR LAKE CLEAN. LAST YEAR SOMETHING HAPPENED AND THEY DIDN'T MAKE IT. IF THESE DON'T GET THROUGH...

OUR ONLY WATER SOURCE IS GOING TO BE COVERED IN MUCK AND MOSS.

SO IF YOU'D LET MY SOLDIER GET BACK TO WORK...



WHAT'S THE PROBLEM NOW, CAP?

LUMBER BEARS.

LUMBER BEARS! IF THAT DON'T BEAT ALL, WE ALREADY RAN OFF THE TIMBER WOLVES!

AND WITH THEM GONE THE LUMBER BEARS MOVED IN.



WELL, WITH THE FULL FORCE OF THE HELM WE CAN TAKE A FEW LUMBER BEARS.

IF WE HIT THEM JUST BEFORE THE FISH COME THROUGH—

I'M NOT LOSING ANY PONIES FIGHTING FOR A FEW FISH. AND THE RIVER RUNS RIGHT THROUGH THE FOREST. AS SOON AS WE TAKE ONE DOWN, IT WILL REBUILD ITSELF.

THERE'S NO WAY TO MAKE SURE THEY STAY SAFE, AND WE'RE NOT RISKING PONY LIVES.



THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY.

WELL, IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING, I SUGGEST YOU DO IT NOW, OR I'M CALLING THIS WHOLE OPERATION OFF.

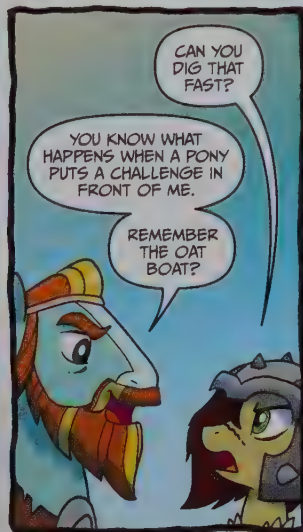
AHEM!



I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO TAKE A HIKE, LITTLEST UNICORN.

I... UMMM... I HAVE AN IDEA ON HOW TO SAVE THE FISH.

COULD I SEE A MAP?



NOW, I HAD READ THE LEGEND OF ROCKHOOF, BUT I ALWAYS FIGURED IT WAS AN EXAGGERATION. BUT BEFORE I KNEW IT, THERE WAS A WIDENING TRENCH LEADING AWAY FROM THE FOREST AND TOWARD THE TOWN.

I HAD NEVER SEEN ANYPONY MOVE LIKE THAT PONY MOVED WHEN HE WAS DIGGING.

AS FOR ME, I KNEW THAT IF THE RIVER CHANGED OVER TOO SOON, WE'D BE KNEE DEEP IN LUMBER BEARS BEFORE THE FISH EVER GOT HERE, SO I MADE A MAGICAL WALL TO KEEP THE RIVER FROM PUSHING ITS WAY INTO THE TRENCH.

AND CAPTAIN STEELA KEPT WATCH, MAKING SURE NO LUMBER BEARS WANDERED UP TO ATTACK US WHILE WE WERE WORKING.

BE HONEST WITH ME, KID. YOU REALLY THINK THIS IS GONNA WORK?

—AND WHAT IF THEY'RE EARLY?

IF MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT AND ROCKHOOF IS AS FAST AS HE THINKS, THEN—

WHY?

BECAUSE THEY'RE EARLY. THAT'S OUR SIGNAL!

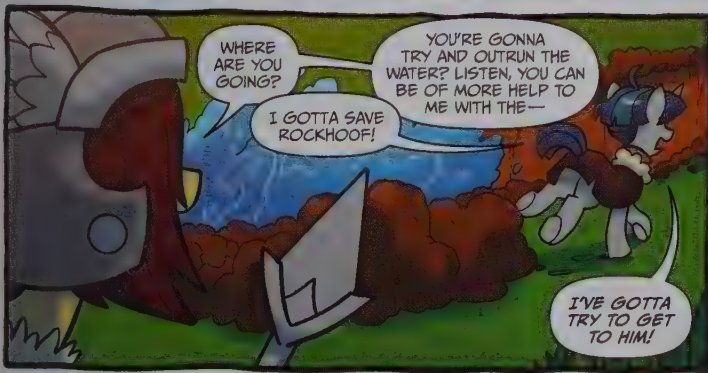
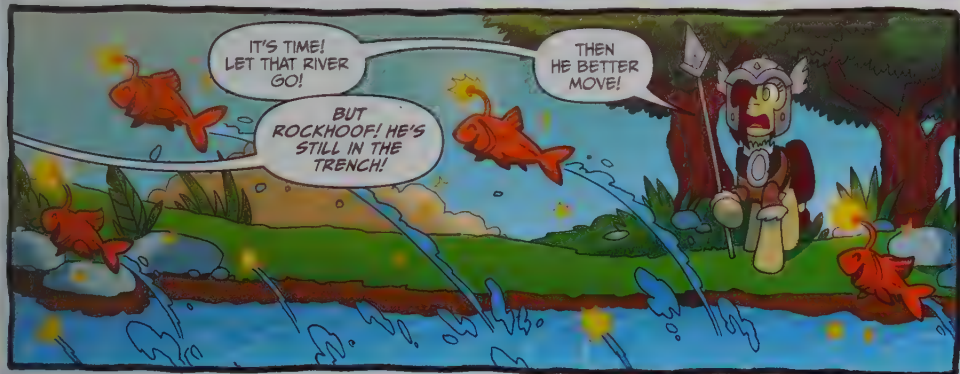
ROCKHOOF!

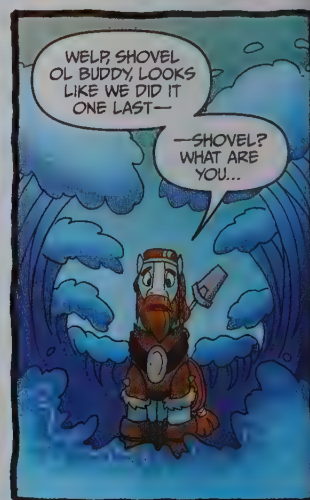
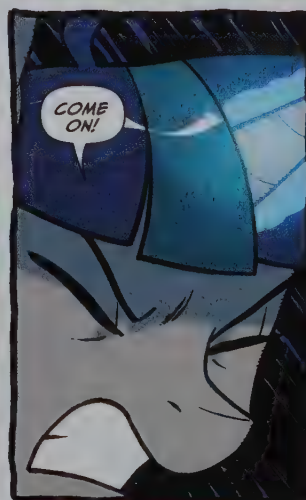
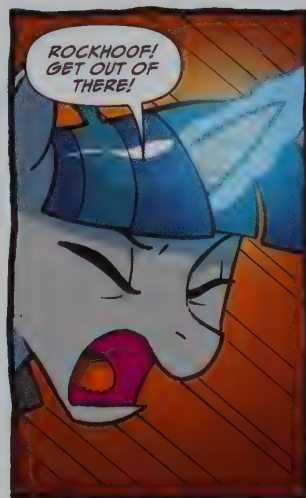
OH NO! I CAN'T LET THE WALL DOWN YET, ROCKHOOF IS STILL DIGGING!

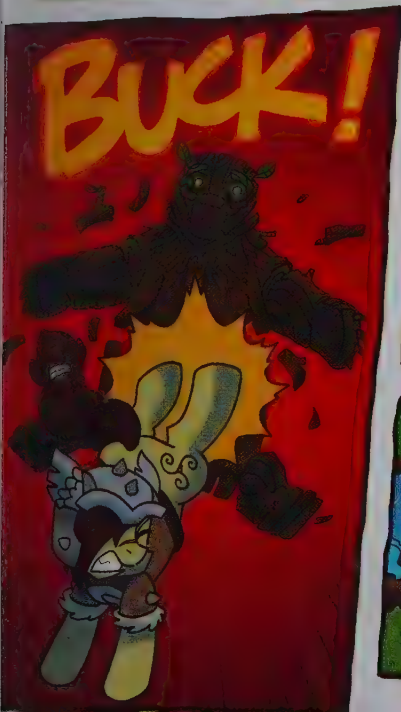
HUH?

DOUBLE TIME, ROCKHOOF! THEY'RE ALMOST HERE!

WELL, SUPPOSE IT'S TIME TO DO WHAT I DO BEST.







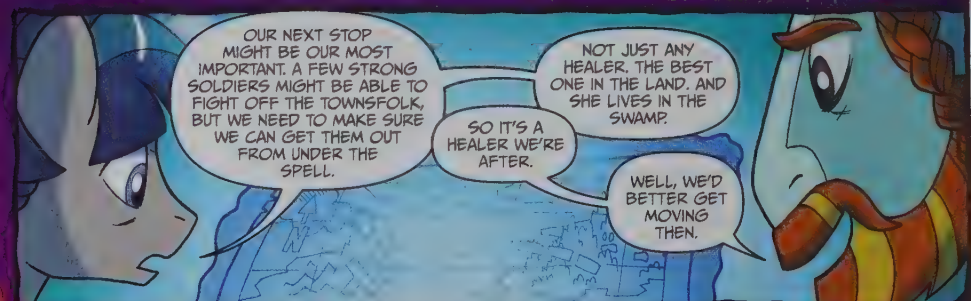


WELL, THEN,
YOU'VE PONY, WHICH
WAY TO THIS VILLAGE
WE NEED TO
SAVE?

I DON'T THINK
WE'RE QUITE READY
TO SAVE IT YET. WE'RE
GOING TO NEED SOME
MORE HELP.

I SEE. IT'S AN
ADVENTURING PARTY
YOU'RE AFTER
THEN, EH?

SOMETHING
LIKE THAT.



OUR NEXT STOP
MIGHT BE OUR MOST
IMPORTANT. A FEW STRONG
SOLDIERS MIGHT BE ABLE TO
FIGHT OFF THE TOWNSFOLK,
BUT WE NEED TO MAKE SURE
WE CAN GET THEM OUT
FROM UNDER THE
SPELL.

SO IT'S A
HEALER WE'RE
AFTER.

NOT JUST ANY
HEALER. THE BEST
ONE IN THE LAND, AND
SHE LIVES IN THE
SWAMP.

WELL, WE'D
BETTER GET
MOVING
THEN.

AND SO WE DID.

THIS TRIP WAS JUST AS LONG
AS THE ONE I HAD UNDERTAKEN
ALONE TO FIND ROCKHOOF, BUT
IT SEEMED SO MUCH SHORTER.

ROCKHOOF PROVED TO BE
VERY GOOD COMPANY. HE
WAS ALWAYS ENCOURAGING
AND QUICK WITH A JOKE.

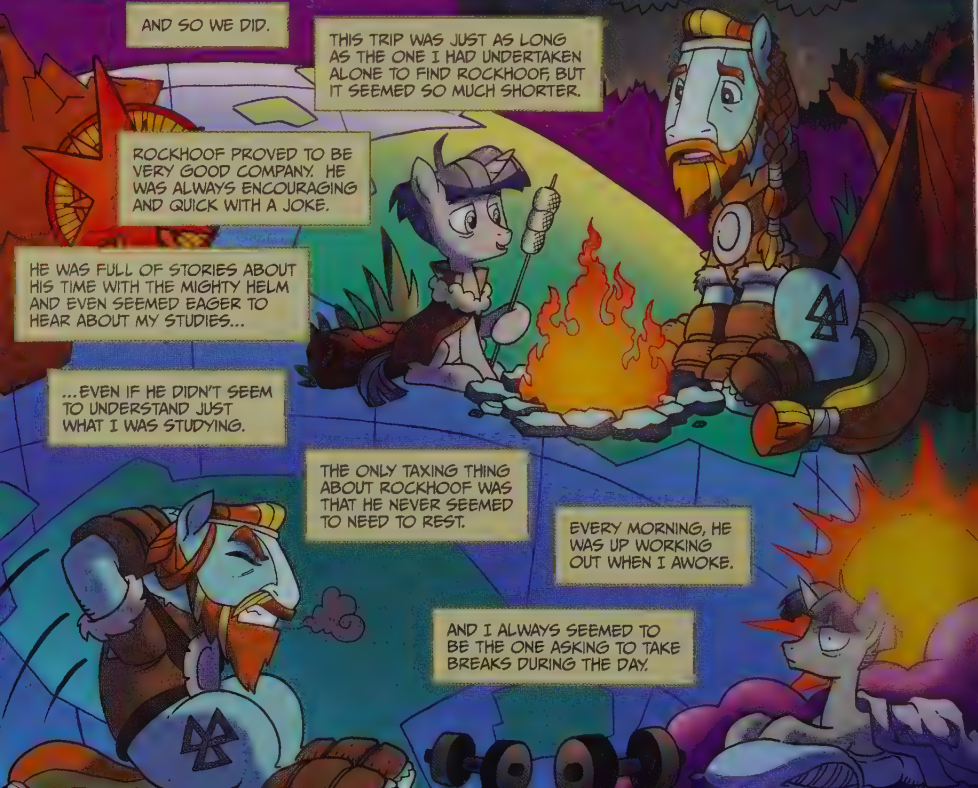
HE WAS FULL OF STORIES ABOUT
HIS TIME WITH THE MIGHTY HELM
AND EVEN SEEMED EAGER TO
HEAR ABOUT MY STUDIES...

...EVEN IF HE DIDN'T SEEM
TO UNDERSTAND JUST
WHAT I WAS STUDYING.

THE ONLY TAXING THING
ABOUT ROCKHOOF WAS
THAT HE NEVER SEEMED
TO NEED TO REST.

EVERY MORNING, HE
WAS UP WORKING
OUT WHEN I AWOKE.

AND I ALWAYS SEEMED TO
BE THE ONE ASKING TO TAKE
BREAKS DURING THE DAY.



AND THEN, AFTER DAYS OF WALKING, WE FINALLY FOUND OURSELVES ENTERING THE SWAMP.

THIS PLACE IS CREEPY. WHERE ARE ALL OF THE ANIMALS?

IT'S NOT SO BAD. SWAMPS ARE FULL OF PREDATORS THAT LIKE TO HIDE, SO THE LITTLE ANIMALS LEARN TO HIDE TOO.

YOU KNOW, EVERY STEP WE TAKE, IT SEEMS TO GET SPOOKIER.

NONSENSE! IT GIVES THE PLACE ATMOSPHERE, SO MUCH PLANT LIFE AND SUCH LOW ELEVATION. DON'T YOU FEEL HOW RICH THE AIR IS HERE?

I... CAN'T SAY I DO.

HERE'S THE THING, FRIEND. WHERE I LIVE IS HIGH DESERT, AND OUR TOWN IS RIGHT NEXT TO A VOLCANO. PONIES WEREN'T MEANT TO LIVE THERE.

HERE, THOUGH... THIS PLACE IS MEANT FOR ALL MANNER OF CREATURES. MAYBE WE EVEN SEE SOME NICE FLUFFY SORTS.

LIKE THAT ONE?

OH YEAH! LOOK AT HIM!

I AM. HE'S STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR ROAD.

HEY, THERE, LITTLE FELLA. WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?



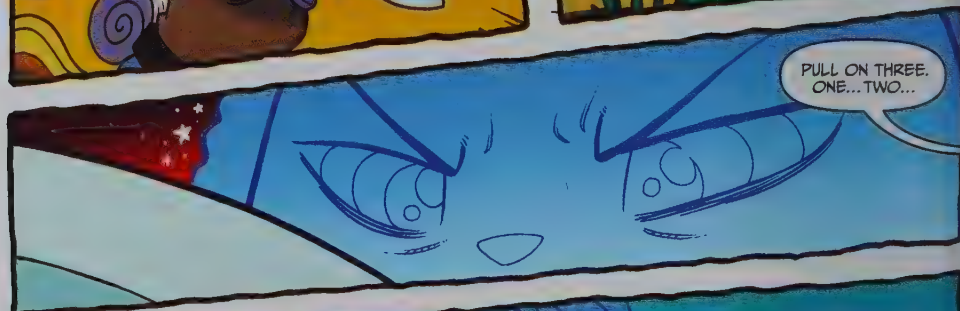
HE'S AN EVIL
BUNNY! GET HIM
OFF ME!



NOW COME
OFF OF THERE!
WHAT KIND OF
BUNNY ARE YOU,
ANYWAY?

ROCKHOOF, JUST
PULL BACKWARD AND
I'LL PULL FORWARD.
WE'LL HAVE HIM
RIGHT OFF.

AN EVIL ONE!
A PONY-EATIN'
ONE!



PULL ON THREE.
ONE... TWO...

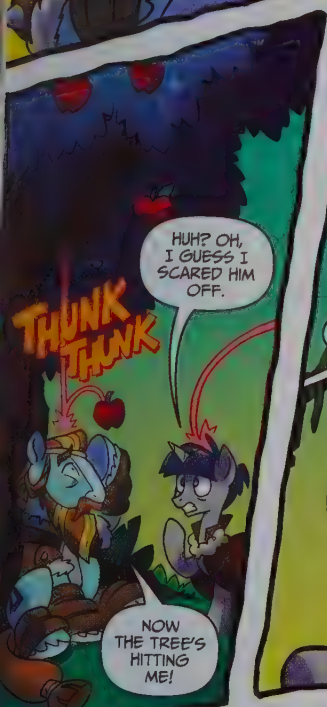


THREE!



WAAAHH!
HE KICKED
ME!

GAH! NOW
HE'S ON MY
FACE!



HUH? OH,
I GUESS I
SCARED HIM
OFF.

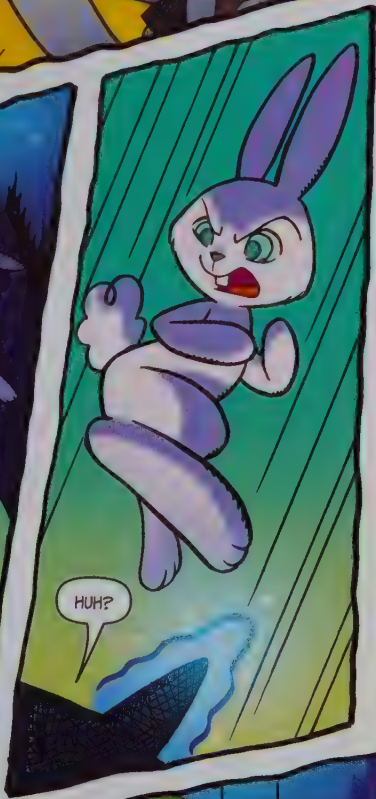
THUNK
THANK

NOW
THE TREE'S
HITTING
ME!



ROCKHOOF?
ARE YOU
OKAY?

LOOK OUT!



HUH?



NOT THIS TIME,
LITTLE BUDDY! I
CAUGHT YOU.

WHAT DO YOU
THINK HE'S GOING
ON ABOUT?

HA! YOU KNOW,
I BET HE'S CALLING
REINFORCEMENTS!

SECONDS LATER.

AAAAAAHHHHHHH!



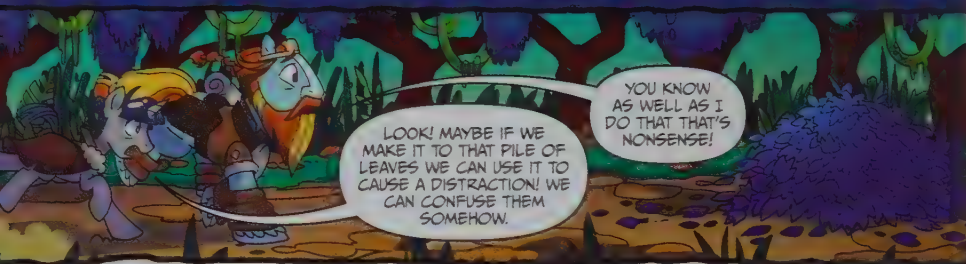
THIS SWAMP
IS TRYING TO
KILL US!

I JUST WANTED
TO PET A BUNNY!
IS THAT SO MUCH
TO ASK?



YOU KNOW
AS WELL AS I
DO THAT THAT'S
NONSENSE!

LOOK! MAYBE IF WE
MAKE IT TO THAT PILE OF
LEAVES WE CAN USE IT TO
CAUSE A DISTRACTION! WE
CAN CONFUSE THEM
SOMEHOW.



I DON'T HEAR
YOU COMING UP
WITH ANY—
GYAH!

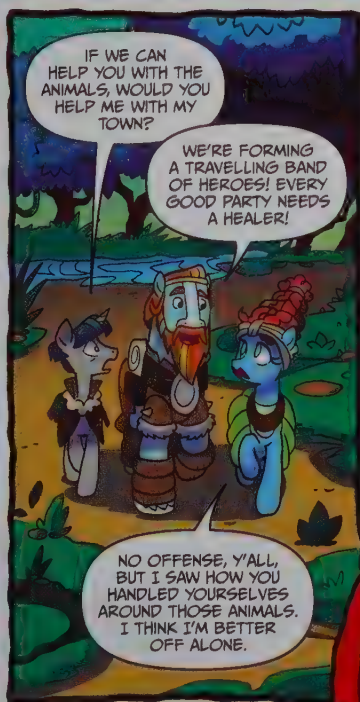
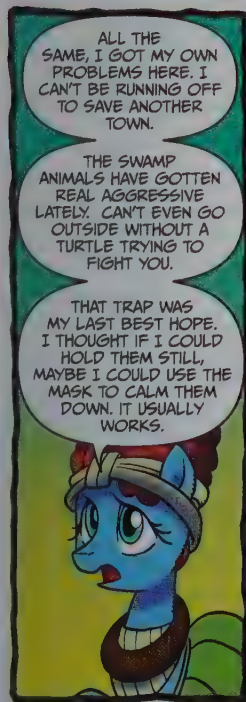


THUNK!











WHAT KIND OF HOUSE IS THIS? WHY ARE WE HERE?

IT'S A GATOR HOLE. SOMETHING YOU SAID GOT ME THINKING.



I'M SORRY, IT'S A WHO HOLE?

GATOR HOLE. IT'S A HOME FOR ALLIGATORS.

HA, OKAY... BUT THERE'S NOPONY THERE, RIGHT?



GO AWAY!!



ALLIE? ALLIE IT'S ME, MEADOWBROOK!

THESE ALLIGATORS CAN SPEAK PONY?

NO, JUST ALLIE. WE GREW UP TOGETHER. SHE PICKED IT UP FROM ME.

I'M NOT ALLOWED TO TALK TO YOU.

WHY?



MY MA SAYS WE AIN'T TO TALK TO ANY HERBIVORES TILL SHE SAYS SO.

ON ACCOUNT OF A GROUP OF SQUIRRELS BEAT UP MY BROTHER RALPHIE.

I SEE. WELL THAT'S ALL I NEED TO KNOW. THANKS, ALLIE.



Art by Brenda Hickey



Art by Tony Fleecs





"LEGEND HAS IT THAT DEEP IN THE HEART OF EQUESTRIA THERE ARE SWAMPS SO BIG AND DARK THAT NO PONY HAS EVER SEEN ALL OF THE CREATURES THAT LIVE THERE.

"THAT THERE IS DANGER AND INTRIGUE AND, IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL, YOU MAY NEVER LIVE TO TELL THE TALE.

"BUT EVEN DEEPER STILL IS THE HOME OF MAGE MEADOWBROOK.

"MAGE MEADOWBROOK IS RUMORED TO BE THE GREATEST HEALER AND POTION MAKER IN ALL OF EQUESTRIA.

"LEGEND HAS IT THAT MEADOWBROOK'S MASK HAS SPECIAL MAGICAL PROPERTIES.

"AND WHEN SHE'S WEARING IT SHE CAN ENTRANCE ALL MANNER OF CREATURES.

"EVEN MORE IMPRESSIVE, THEY SAY MEADOWBROOK CURED SWAMP FEVER, ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS AND DEADLY DISEASES IN ALL OF EQUESTRIA.

"THEY SAY MEADOWBROOK HAS NEVER MET A CONDITION SHE COULDN'T CURE.

"I HOPE THE LEGENDS
WERE RIGHT."

MEADOWBROOK!





WHAT'S ALL THE RUCKUS?

AN ARMY OF HUGGABLY FLUFFY ANIMALS IS ABOUT TO MARCH INTO YOUR HOME.

WELL, SHOOT, THE REMEDY AIN'T READY YET.



ROCKHOOF YOU CLOSE AND HOLD THAT DOOR. YOU MUST WEIGH AS MUCH AS A HUNDRED BUNNIES.

STYGIAN, FOLLOW ME UP TOP. I GOT SOME IDEAS.



I NEED YOU TO GIVE ME AS MUCH TIME AS YOU CAN. THAT DOOR AND THIS UPSTAIRS WINDOW ARE THE ONLY WAY IN.

YOU GOTTA KEEP 'EM AWAY.

HOW?



FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK.

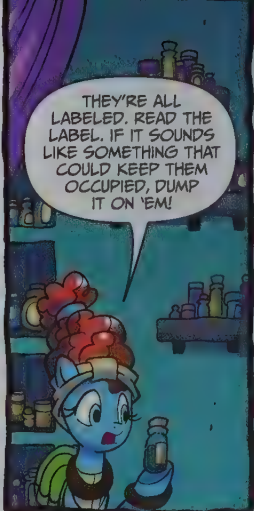
WHOA! WHAT IS ALL THIS?



IT'S MY POTION COLLECTION. I KEEP A LOT OF THINGS ON HAND FOR EMERGENCIES.

WHAT DO THEY DO?

A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING.



THEY'RE ALL LABELED. READ THE LABEL. IF IT SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING THAT COULD KEEP THEM OCCUPIED, DUMP IT ON 'EM!



WHAT? HOW? WHO NOW?

YOU'LL FIGURE IT OUT! THIS IS AN EMERGENCY.



HOW DO I EVEN KNOW WHERE TO LOOK? THERE ARE SO MANY—

ONE MORE THING!



PLEASE BE CAREFUL NOT TO REALLY HURT ANY OF THEM. THEY DON'T REALLY WANT TO HURT US.

SO MAYBE STAY AWAY FROM THE FIRE AND ACID POTIONS, OKAY?

BUT YOU KNEW THAT, RIGHT? I DIDN'T REALLY HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT.



IS THERE
NO LOCK ON THIS
DOOR? NO BOLT
OR ANYTHING?

I LIVE IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE
SWAMP. WHO'S GONNA
BREAK IN?



YOU KNOW,
FOR A BUNCH OF
FURBALLS, THEY
PUSH PRETTY
HARD.

THE SICKNESS
DRIVES THEM TO BE
EXTRA AGGRESSIVE.
USUALLY YOU DON'T HAVE TO
WORRY ABOUT A BUNNY
HEADBUTTING YOU.

HEADBUTTING
BUNNIES? NOW YOU'RE
JUST MAKING ME WANT
TO OPEN THE
DOOR.



PINK... PINK...
THIS SHOULD BE
PURPLE!

WHAT AM I
MISSING?



THIS
SHOULD DO
THE TRICK!



HOW
YOU DOING
OVER THERE,
ROCKHOOF?



BOOM!

AH DANG!
THAT ONE
WAS—

SCREE

UHHMMM—

THONK!

SLAM!

WHAT WAS
THAT?

NOTHING. I
COULD JUST
USE SOME
BACKUP.

YOU HEAR
THAT, STYGIAN?! I
COULD USE SOME
BACKUP!

OKAY,
OKAY!

OKAY, I FOR SURE DO NOT WANT TO USE THE ONE WITH THE SKULL AND CROSSBONES.

AND I THINK THE ONE WITH THE VOLCANO IS BETTER OFF ON THE SHELF.

OKAY, TREE OR SPIRAL. TREE? OR SPIRAL?

I MEAN, WHAT COULD THE TREE ONE EVEN DO? MAYBE IT WILL HURT OUR TREE.

BUT THE SPIRAL COULD BE ANYTHING. WHAT IF IT OPENS A GATE IN TIME AND SPACE AND ALL OF THE ANGRY BUNNIES ARE PULLED INTO THE FUTURE AND—

STYGIAN!

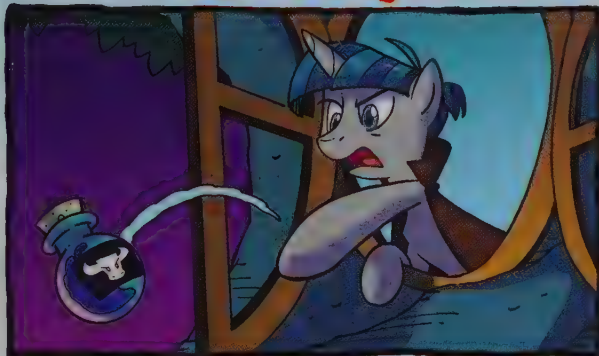
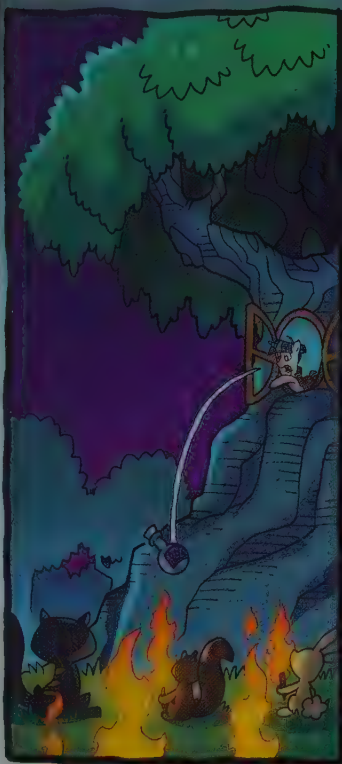
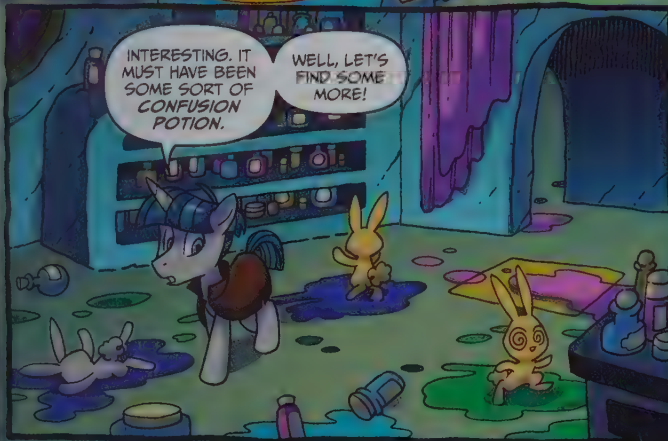
HERE COMES A SPIRAL OR SOMETHING, PUNKS!

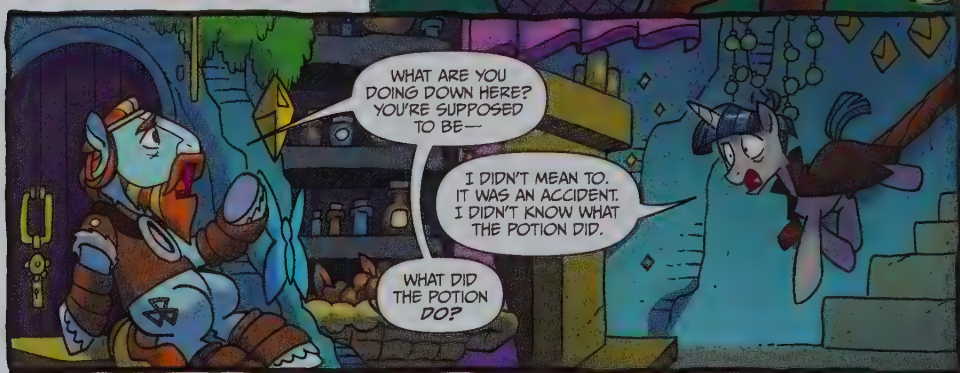
GAH! IT DIDN'T DO ANYTHING! I THOUGHT FOR SURE THE SPIRAL WOULD DO SOME—

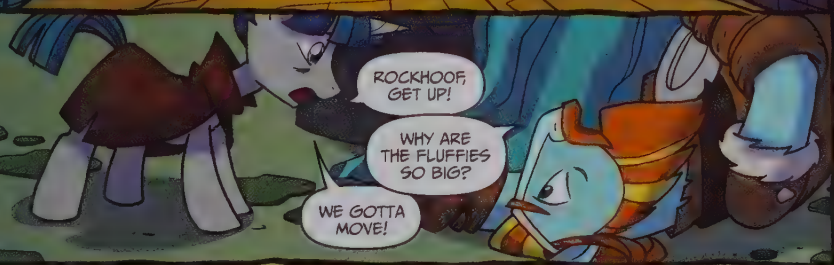
GAH! I THREW THE WRONG ONE! STYGIAN WHY CAN'T YOU—

RUMMMBULLLEE











A LITTLE WHILE LATER.

SO, YOU SAY
YOUR TOWNFOLK
ARE UNDER SOME
KINDA SPELL,
EH?

YES. SIRENS
ARE DRAINING THEM
OF ALL THEIR
MAGIC.



SURE, I'LL
COME WITH
YOU.

I USED TO TRAVEL
ALL THE TIME, BUT
AFTER I GOT STUCK IN
A VILLAGE FULL OF
ZOMBIE PONIES...

...WELL, I
DECIDED I'D
RATHER BE A
HOMEBODY.



WAIT,
ZOMBIE
PONIES?

THAT'S A
LEGEND FOR
ANOTHER TIME,
FRIEND.

RIGHT NOW I'M
MORE INTERESTED
IN HOW WE'RE GONNA
GET PAST THOSE
SIRENS.



I THINK I
HAVE JUST THE
PONY FOR
THAT.

WAIT! CAN WE EAT
FIRST? I CAN'T START
ANOTHER TRAVELING
MONTAGE WITHOUT
EATING FIRST!





THANKS FOR THE HOSPITALITY. I'M SURE YOU'RE NOT USED TO COOKING SO MUCH, A LITTLE MARE LIKE—

YOU WERE SAYING?

YOWZA! YOU SEEING THIS STYGIAN?

UH-HUH, SURE.

I GUESS YOUR EYES WERE BIGGER THAN YOUR TUMMY, HUH?

MA'AM, AIN'T NOTHIN' BIGGER THAN MY TUMMY RIGHT NOW!

THAT WAS TASTY!

I THINK I'M IN LOVE.



MEADOWBROOK,
WHY DO YOU LIVE SO
FAR OUT IN THE SWAMP
ANYWAY?

THAT'S EASY. THERE
ARE PLANTS AND ANIMALS
THE REST OF THE WORLD HAS
NEVER SEEN IN THE DEEP
SWAMP. I CAN MAKE POTIONS
OTHER PONIES NEVER
DREAMED OF.

WHEN I GET OLD I
WANNA LIVE SOMEWHERE
LIKE YOUR SWAMP, AWAY
FROM ALL THE HUSTLE
AND BUSTLE.

YOU DON'T WANT
TO HAVE ANY COLTS
OR FILLIES OF YOUR
OWN? YOU SEEM LIKE
THE GRANDPAPPY
TYPE.

I AIN'T SURE
HOW TO TAKE
THAT.

STYGIAN,
YOU DON'T
TALK MUCH,
DO YA?

I'M JUST THINKING.
I'M WORRIED ABOUT
WHAT'S HAPPENING
BACK AT HOME.

FINALLY,
WE MADE
IT!

THIS?

THIS IS THE
TRAINING CAMP FOR
THE PEGASI ROYAL
LEGION?

I DON'T SEE
ONE SOLDIER! WHY,
IF THIS WAS THE
GREAT HELM—

NOT THERE,
ROCKHOOF—

THERE.

OH.

LET'S
CHECK IT
OUT.

BUT... HOW
ARE WE MEANT
TO GET UP
THERE?



WE'RE NOT
GONNA FIGHT. I WAS
JUST GIVING THIS PUNY
FLYIN PONY A HARD
TIME.

THIS ONE'S
NOT A SOLDIER,
EH?

NOPE.
SOME KIND OF
BOOKWORM.

FRIEND, IF THE
TWO OF US WERE GONNA
FIGHT, WE WOULDN'T HAVE
SPENT SO MUCH TIME
TALKING.

DID YOU
UNDERSTAND ANY
OF THAT?

I GUESS
THEY'RE
FRIENDS
NOW.

I WANNA
GO BACK TO
STUDYING
SHELLS.

HEY,
BUCKETHEAD,
WE'RE LOOKING FOR
SOME HORSE
CALLED...

...WHAT WAS IT?
HAY GARRICK? MARE
E. ALLEN? WHINNY
WEST?

FLASH
MAGNUS?

**FLASH
MAGNUS!**
THAT'S IT!

FLASH? I'M
AFRAID YOU WON'T
BE ABLE TO TALK
TO HIM.

AIWWWW,
COME ON, GRIMMY.
I THOUGHT WE
WERE FRIENDS.

HE'S NOT
HERE. HE GOT
CALLED TO THE
FRONT.





DRAGONS!

I... UH...

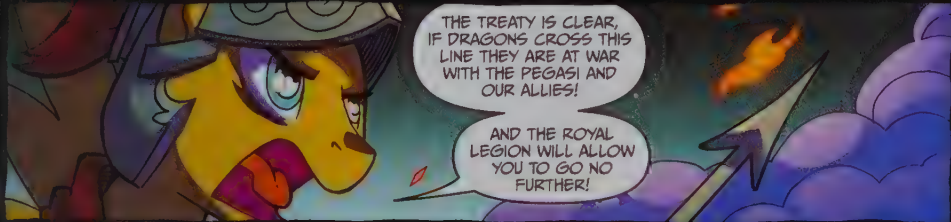
...I MAY
HAVE SPOKEN
TOO SOON.

Art by Brenda Hickey



Art by Tony Fleecs



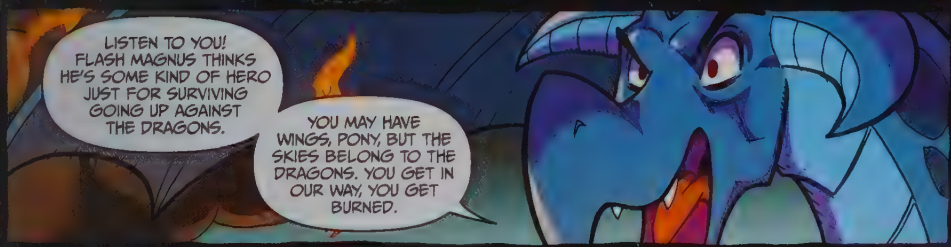


THE TREATY IS CLEAR,
IF DRAGONS CROSS THIS
LINE THEY ARE AT WAR
WITH THE PEGASI AND
OUR ALLIES!

AND THE ROYAL
LEGION WILL ALLOW
YOU TO GO NO
FURTHER!

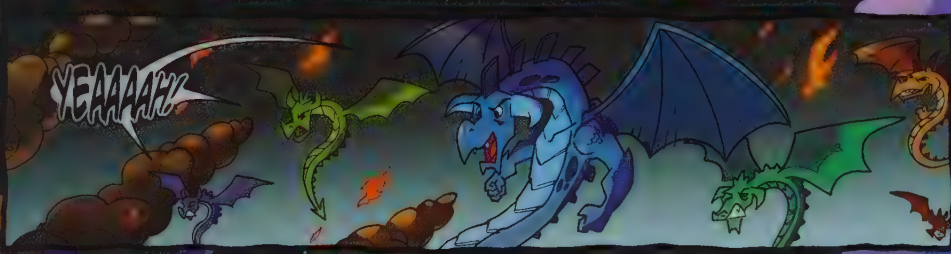


HUZZAH!



LISTEN TO YOU!
FLASH MAGNUS THINKS
HE'S SOME KIND OF HERO
JUST FOR SURVIVING
GOING UP AGAINST
THE DRAGONS.

YOU MAY HAVE
WINGS, PONY, BUT THE
SKIES BELONG TO THE
DRAGONS. YOU GET IN
OUR WAY, YOU GET
BURNED.



YEAH!!!



IF THAT'S
THE WAY YOU
WANT IT.

READY
WHEN YOU
ARE.

EXCUSE
US?

HI THERE. MY
NAME IS... UH...
STYGIAN...

AND I WAS
HOPING THAT MAYBE
WE COULD HAVE A
WORD WITH YOU.
PLEASE?



ME?

HIM?



NO NO,
SORRY.

I MEANT
FLASH... I MEAN,
MR. MAGNUS, SIR.
IF YOU WOULDN'T
MIND.

WELL, I'M
SORT OF IN
THE MIDDLE OF
SOMETHING...
BUT...



WAIT. WHAT
AM I SAYING?
OF COURSE
NOT!

GET OUT
OF HERE, LITTLE
PONY. THIS IS NO
PLACE FOR YOU.
IT'S ABOUT TO
BE A BATTLE
FIELD.

GO HOME!

BUT
I CAN'T.

DON'T WORRY,
LITTLE BUDDY.
I'LL HANDLE
THIS.

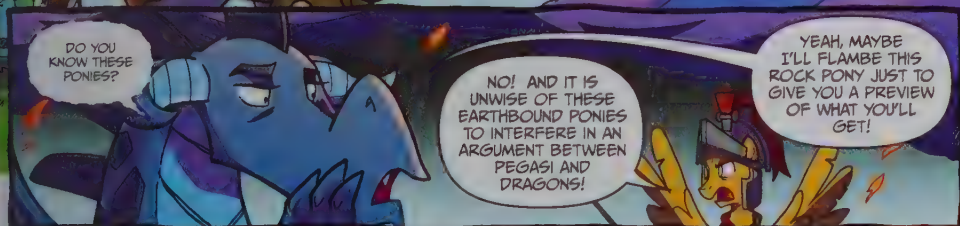
ROCKHOOF,
NO!





NOW YOU LISTEN HERE YOU HARD-HEADED, FANCY-FEATHERED, SKY-TROTTER, GLORIFIED CLOUD MOVER!

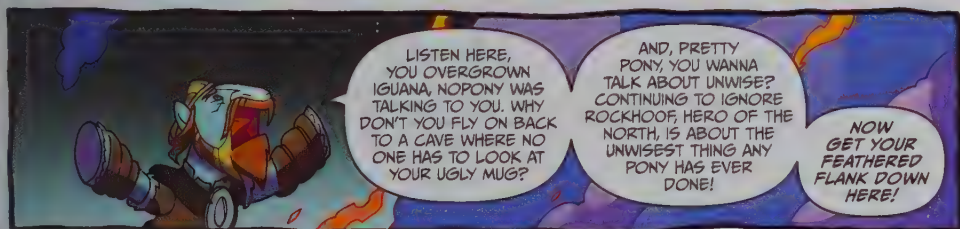
YOU GOT A LOT OF NERVE SHOUTING DOWN A PONY HALF YOUR SIZE! LET'S SEE IF YOU THINK YOU'RE BIG ENOUGH TO SHOUT ME DOWN!



DO YOU KNOW THESE PONIES?

NO! AND IT IS UNWISE OF THESE EARTHBOUND PONIES TO INTERFERE IN AN ARGUMENT BETWEEN PEGASI AND DRAGONS!

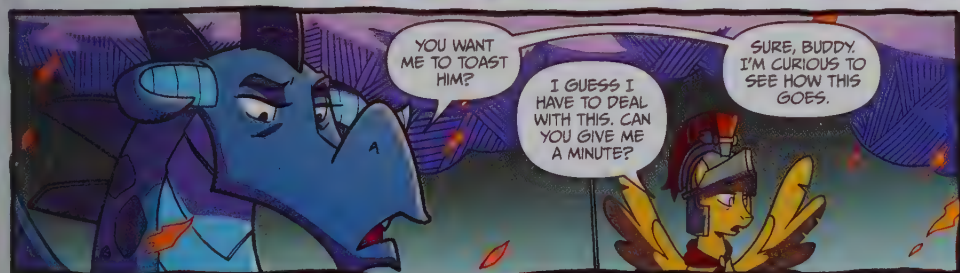
YEAH, MAYBE I'LL FLAMBE THIS ROCK PONY JUST TO GIVE YOU A PREVIEW OF WHAT YOU'LL GET!



LISTEN HERE, YOU OVERGROWN IGUANA, NOPONY WAS TALKING TO YOU. WHY DON'T YOU FLY ON BACK TO A CAVE WHERE NO ONE HAS TO LOOK AT YOUR UGLY MUG?

AND, PRETTY PONY, YOU WANNA TALK ABOUT UNWISE? CONTINUING TO IGNORE ROCKHOOF, HERO OF THE NORTH, IS ABOUT THE UNWISDEST THING ANY PONY HAS EVER DONE!

NOW GET YOUR FEATHERED FLANK DOWN HERE!



YOU WANT ME TO TOAST HIM?

I GUESS I HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS. CAN YOU GIVE ME A MINUTE?

SURE, BUDDY. I'M CURIOUS TO SEE HOW THIS GOES.



GOOD LUCK!

THANKS.



WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS? I AM A COMMANDER OF THE ROYAL LEGION AND I AM TRYING TO—



WELL, STYGIAN, I GOT HIM TO PAY ATTENTION. NOW YOU MAKE THE SALES PITCH.



HI AGAIN, MR. MAGNUS. MY NAME IS STYGIAN. MY NAME IS STYGIAN AND I HAVE A BIG PROBLEM.

IS IT BIGGER THAN DRAGONS?

I... UH... ACTUALLY THINK IT MIGHT BE!

REALLY?



SO, I NOTICE YOU'RE STARING AWFULLY HARD AT OUR FIRE-BREATHING FRIENDS.

AM I? I MEAN ...AREN'T THEY JUST GLORIOUS, THOUGH? WITH THEIR GIANT WINGS AND THEIR FIRE BREATH. I DON'T KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT EM, BUT—

YEAH?



LOOKING AT SOME OF EM... THEY DON'T LOOK RIGHT. I THINK THEY MIGHT BE SICK.

YOU THINK THAT HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH WHY THEY'RE HERE? MAYBE YOU CAN HELP.

ME? I'M JUST A PONY. THEY PROBABLY WON'T EVEN TALK TO ME.

COULDN'T HURT TO ASK.



YOU THINK I SHOULD?





LISTEN, YOU SEEM
LIKE GOOD PONIES AND
I WISH YOU LUCK, BUT
I DON'T HAVE TIME
FOR THIS.

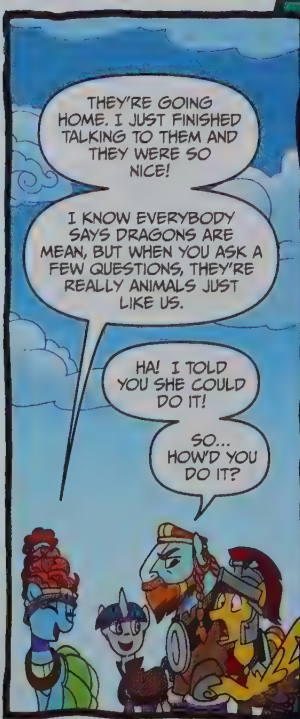
I HAVE
TO DEAL WITH
THESE—



—DRAGONS!

WHA..
WHERE ARE
THE DRAGONS
GOING?

HUH? OH!



THEY'RE GOING
HOME. I JUST FINISHED
TALKING TO THEM AND
THEY WERE SO
NICE!

I KNOW EVERYBODY
SAYS DRAGONS ARE
MEAN, BUT WHEN YOU ASK A
FEW QUESTIONS, THEY'RE
REALLY ANIMALS JUST
LIKE US.

HA! I TOLD
YOU SHE COULD
DO IT!

SO...
HOW'D YOU
DO IT?

"THEY CAME HERE BECAUSE DRAGONS
GOT SICK WITH WHAT THEY CALLED
"WINGBREAK", MAKING DRAGONS LOSE
THEIR WINGS.



"BUT I'VE TREATED PLENTY
OF CROCODILES AND I
RECOGNIZE SCALEROT
WHEN I SEE IT."

THE ONLY PLANT
THEY KNEW THAT COULD
CURE IT ONLY GROWS IN
THE SOUTH, SO THEY FELT
LIKE THEY HAD TO
COME GET IT.

BUT I GAVE
THEM A BOTTLE OF
MY OWN REMEDY AND
I TOLD THEM HOW TO
MAKE IT. IT'S PRETTY
EASY, REALLY.

SO, MR. FLASH
MAGNUS, ARE YOU
COMING WITH
US?



I... UH...
I GUESS
SO.



SO, WHERE IS
THIS VILLAGE?

WE'RE NOT
HEADED THERE JUST
YET. WE HAVE A FEW
MORE HEROES TO
PICK UP.

NEXT UP
IS SOUTHERN
EQUESTRIA.

AH! I'VE
ALWAYS WANTED
TO GO!

ROCKHOOF?



WHAT'S
TROUBLING
YOU?

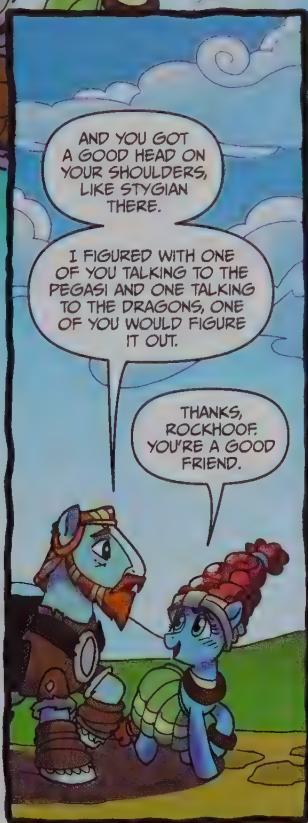
HOW DID YOU
KNOW I COULD HELP
WITH THE DRAGONS? I
NEVER WOULD HAVE
THOUGHT I COULD.

I DIDN'T
FOR SURE,
BUT I HAD AN
INKLING.



YOU'RE A GOOD PONY.
YOU CARE ABOUT OTHER
CREATURES. I SAW HOW THE
ANIMALS IN THE SWAMP
RESPECTED YOU.

I LEARNED A LONG
TIME AGO, SOMETIMES
TAKING TIME TO FIND OUT
WHAT YOUR "ENEMY" WANTS
PROVES THEY WERE NEVER
AN ENEMY TO BEGIN
WITH.



AND YOU GOT
A GOOD HEAD ON
YOUR SHOULDERS,
LIKE STYGIAN
THERE.

I FIGURED WITH ONE
OF YOU TALKING TO THE
PEGASI AND ONE TALKING
TO THE DRAGONS, ONE
OF YOU WOULD FIGURE
IT OUT.

THANKS,
ROCKHOOF.
YOU'RE A GOOD
FRIEND.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT HOW MUCH DAMAGE THE SIRENS MIGHT DO TO MY TOWN.

WELL, LET'S GO IN THERE AND GET THEM. I THINK THE FOUR OF US CAN TAKE EM.

NO NO NO, WE NEED TO COVER ALL OF THE BASES. IF WE RUN IN HALF PREPARED, THEY MAY GET CONTROL OVER US AS WELL. THEN WHO WILL COME SAVE US?

WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR? WHAT ELSE DO WE NEED? I CAN TAKE THEM ON MYSELF AND THE REST OF YOU CAN WATCH!

WELL... I THINK THERE ARE CERTAIN ELEMENTS THAT HEROES POSSESS THAT ALLOW THEM TO SAVE THE WORLD.

SUCH AS?

ROCKHOOF IS STRONG. OBVIOUSLY, STRENGTH IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST TRAITS ASSOCIATED WITH HEROES.

FLASH MAGNUS, YOU'RE FAST. I THINK SPEED IS PROBABLY IMPORTANT.

CAN'T ARGUE WITH THAT. THOUGH I WOULDN'T SAY FAST IS MY BIG—

MAGE MEADOWBROOK IS CONNECTED WITH NATURE. NATURE'S A STRENGTH A LOT OF PONIES FORGET ABOUT. LIKE A HIDDEN GREATNESS.

AND WHAT ABOUT THESE OTHER PONIES?

WELL, THE TWO WE HAVEN'T GONE AFTER YET ARE WISDOM AND LIKE... A SOUL OR SPIRITUAL KIND OF MAGIC.

AND WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHAT KIND OF HERO ARE YOU?

ME, I'M NOT A HERO. I'M JUST A PONY.

THE ONLY ONE I'M NOT SURE ABOUT IS THIS ONE WE'RE LOOKING FOR NOW.

THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT HER, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO CALL IT. MAYBE—

BRAINS!

NO, NOT BRAINS. MORE LIKE A KIND OF—

BRAINS!

JUST TO
BE SURE I DIDN'T
SPILL ONE OF MY
POTIONS...

THE REST OF
YOU ARE SEEING
THIS TOO,
RIGHT?

BRAINS!

YOU MEAN THE
PONIES WRAPPED
IN BANDAGES?
BECAUSE IF YOU
DO, I SEE EM
TOO.

THERE'S
SOMETHING
NOT RIGHT
ABOUT THIS.

STYGIAN, YOU
SEEM LIKE A NICE
KID, BUT THERE'S A
LOT NOT RIGHT
ABOUT THIS.

BRAINS!

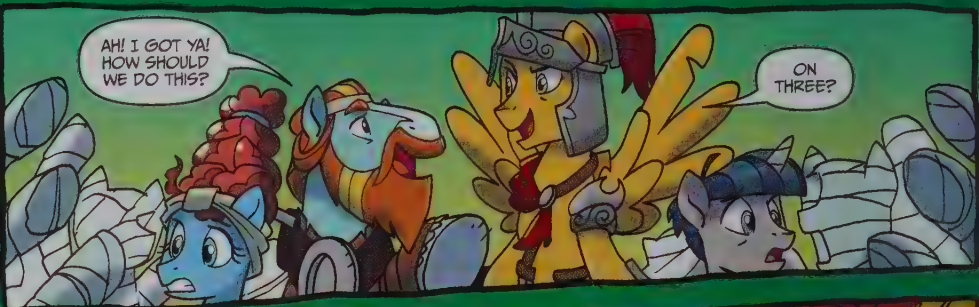
THAT'S NOT
WHAT I MEAN.
THESE ARE
MUMMIES.

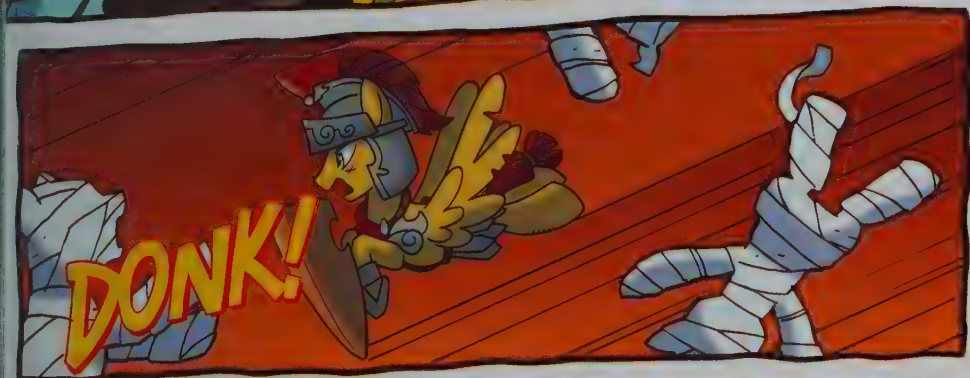
THEY'RE
LEGENDARY
CREATURES IN
SOUTHERN
EQUESTRIA.

WELL, THEY
LOOK MIGHTY
REAL TO ME!

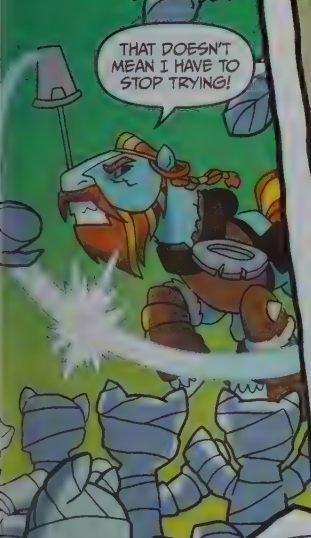
BUT THEY'RE
NOT SUPPOSED TO
BE AGGRESSIVE AND
THEY DEFINITELY
AREN'T SUPPOSED
TO ATTACK IN
GROUPS.

THIS MAY BE A
FIRST, BUT I DON'T
HAVE A POTION
FOR THAT.









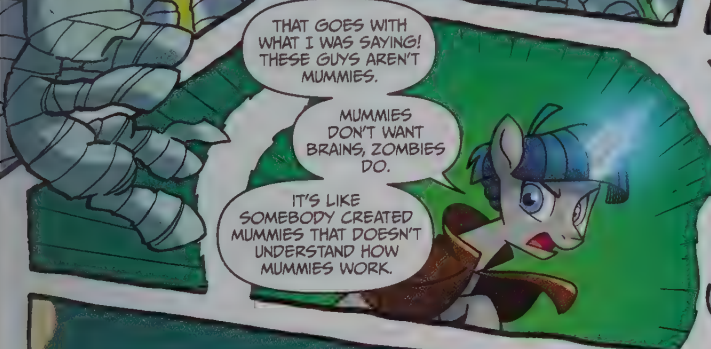
THAT DOESN'T
MEAN I HAVE TO
STOP TRYING!



I THINK
STYGIAN MAY
BE RIGHT. WE'RE
RUNNING OUT OF
ROOM TO
FIGHT!



NOTHING
I DO SLOWS
THEM DOWN! I
TRIED STINK
BOMBS, SLOW
POTIONS, EVEN A
SHRINK POTION!
NOTHING
WORKS!



THAT GOES WITH
WHAT I WAS SAYING!
THESE GUYS AREN'T
MUMMIES.

MUMMIES
DON'T WANT
BRAINS, ZOMBIES
DO.

IT'S LIKE
SOMEBODY CREATED
MUMMIES THAT DOESN'T
UNDERSTAND HOW
MUMMIES WORK.



THEN WHAT
ARE THEY, SMART
GUY?!

I DON'T
KNOW!

I DO!



WHO SAID THAT?

I DID!
CAN YOU SEE ME?

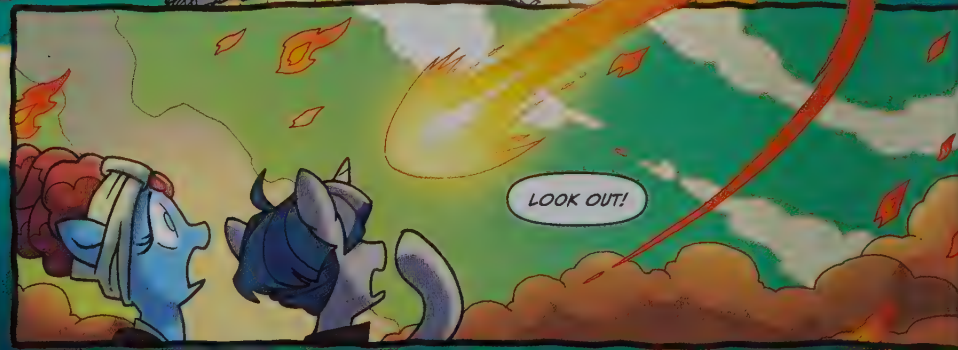
NO.



OH! WELL,
HOLD ON
JUST A—



KI-YA



LOOK OUT!

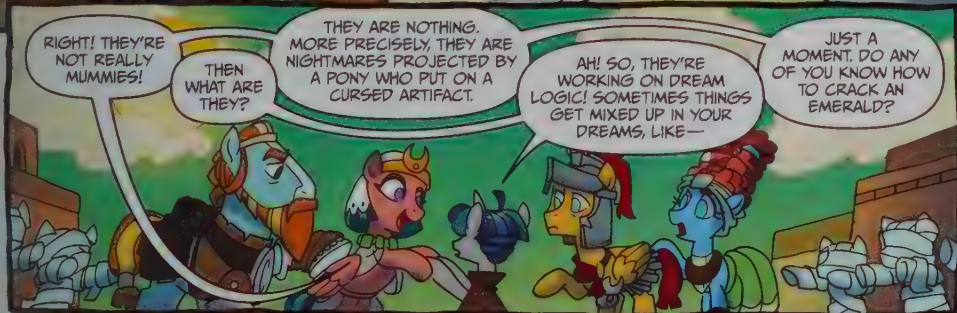


THAT IS
CERTAINLY ONE
WAY TO ESCAPE
A PONY PILE!



GREETINGS! I
AM SOMNAMBULA! IT
IS A RELIEF TO SEE
SOME PONY NOT
WRAPPED IN
BANDAGES!

YEAH, ABOUT
THAT—



RIGHT! THEY'RE
NOT REALLY
MUMMIES!

THEN
WHAT ARE
THEY?

THEY ARE NOTHING.
MORE PRECISELY, THEY ARE
NIGHTMARES PROJECTED BY
A PONY WHO PUT ON A
CURSED ARTIFACT.

AH! SO, THEY'RE
WORKING ON DREAM
LOGIC! SOMETIMES THINGS
GET MIXED UP IN YOUR
DREAMS, LIKE—

JUST A
MOMENT. DO ANY
OF YOU KNOW HOW
TO CRACK AN
EMERALD?



HAVE YOU
TRIED HITTING
IT?

I HAVE,
BUT I LIKE YOUR
APPROACH. VERY
DIRECT.

SOME GEMS WE
USED TO USE IN OUR
ARMOR CRACKED
WHEN WE FLEW
TOO HIGH.

HMM... WELL,
IT IS BEING
WORN BY A PONY
I CANNOT CARRY
5000...

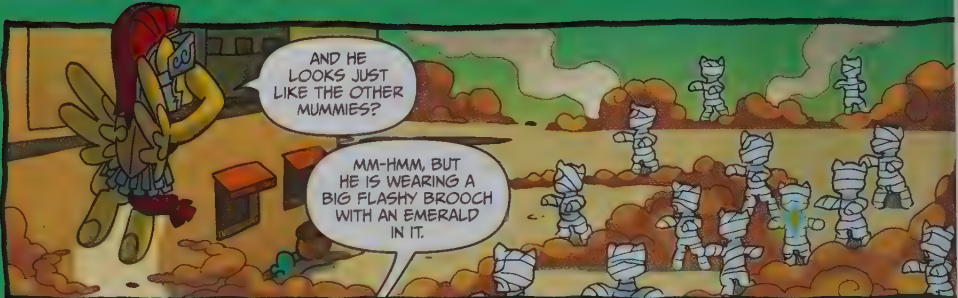


IT'S NOT THE
HEIGHT. IT'S PROBABLY
THE CHANGE IN
TEMPERATURE.

LOTS OF
GEMS CRACK IN
EXTREME HEAT
OR COLD.

THAT'S A
START, BUT HOW
DO WE MAKE IT
EXTREMELY HOT
OR COLD?

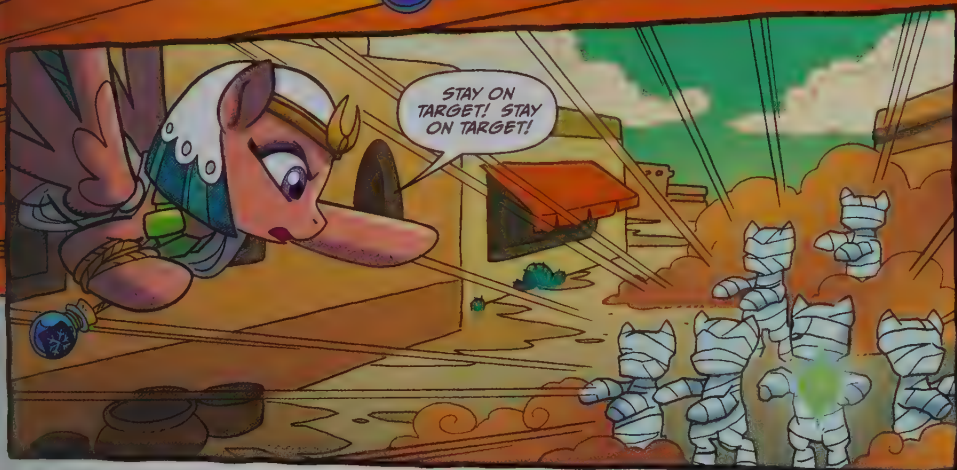
I HAVE
SOMETHING
FOR THAT!



ALMOST
THERE!



STAY ON
TARGET! STAY
ON TARGET!



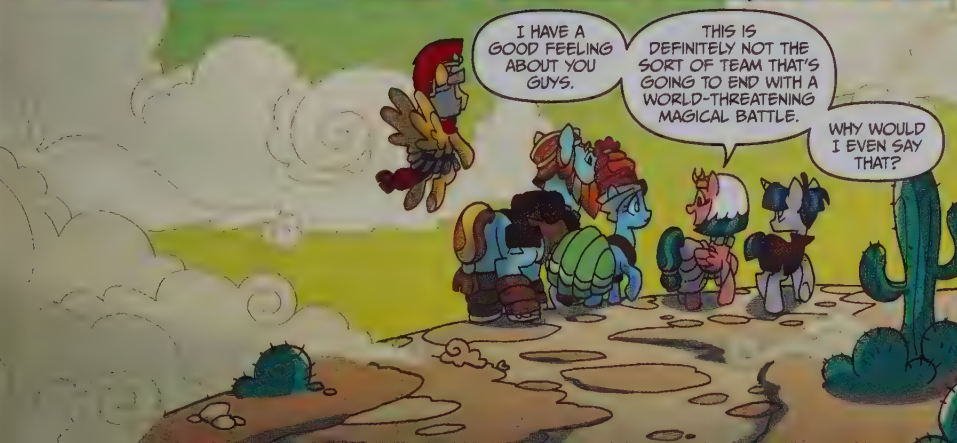
SMASH!

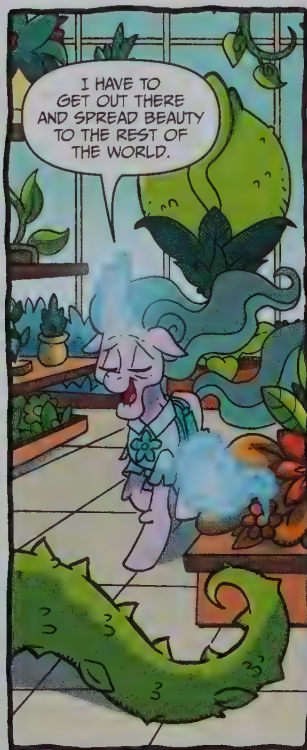
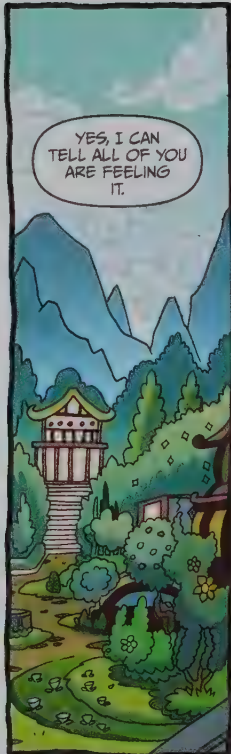


CRACK!









Art by Brenda Hickey



Art by Tony Fleecs





HELLO? MISS
MISTMANE? ARE
YOU THERE?

**Knock
Knock
Knock**



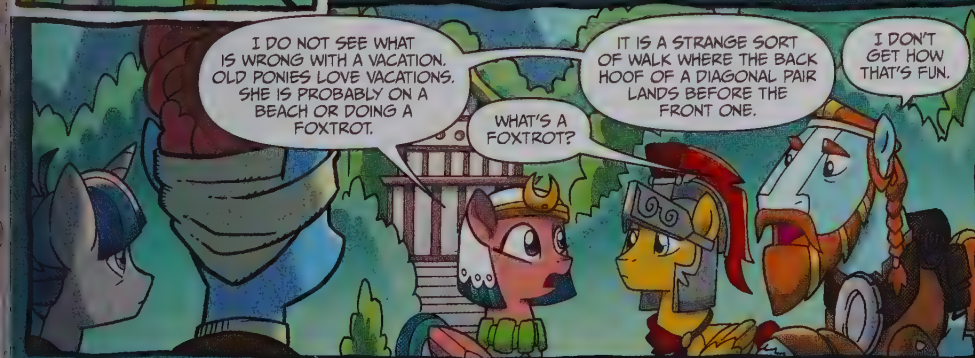
THAT'S REALLY
ODD.

**Knock
Knock**



WHAT'S SO ODD
ABOUT IT, STYGIAN?
PEOPLE DO TAKE TRIPS
SOMETIMES. MAYBE
SHE'S JUST ON
VACATION.

I DON'T THINK
SO, GUYS. I THINK
SOMETHING IS
WRONG HERE.

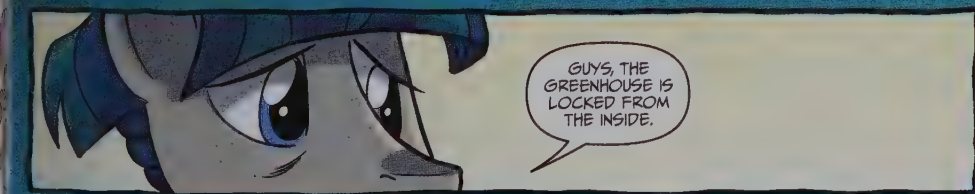


I DO NOT SEE WHAT
IS WRONG WITH A VACATION.
OLD PONIES LOVE VACATIONS.
SHE IS PROBABLY ON A
BEACH OR DOING A
FOXTROT.

WHAT'S A
FOXTROT?

IT IS A STRANGE SORT
OF WALK WHERE THE BACK
HOOF OF A DIAGONAL PAIR
LANDS BEFORE THE
FRONT ONE.

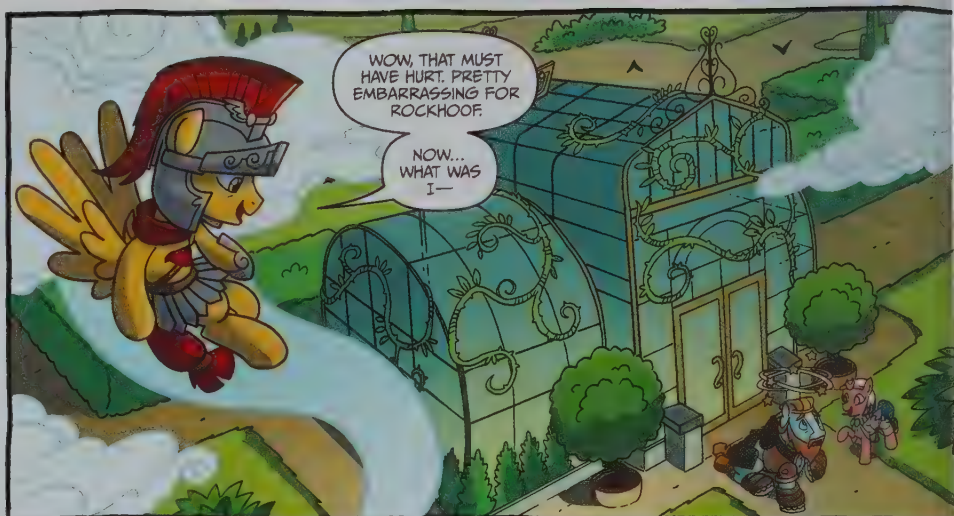
I DON'T
GET HOW
THAT'S FUN.



GUYS, THE
GREENHOUSE IS
LOCKED FROM
THE INSIDE.







WOW, THAT MUST
HAVE HURT. PRETTY
EMBARRASSING FOR
ROCKHOOF.

NOW...
WHAT WAS
I—

—OH YEAH!

WOULDN'T YOU
KNOW IT! THERE'S
AN OPEN PANEL IN
THE ROOF AFTER
ALL.



I'LL BE
IN BEFORE
ANYONE.



I BET
ROCKHOOF'S
FACE WILL BE
RED AFTER—



ROCKHOOF,
WHAT HAPPENED?

THIS DOOR
IS VEXING ME,
STYGIAN, BUT NOT
FOR MUCH
LONGER!

YOU
CAN TRIUMPH,
ROCKHOOF! JUST
ONE SWIFT
KICK!

CREAK.

WHIFF.

THUMP!

THUMP!

YOWCH!





INTERESTING.
IT APPEARS THE
DOOR TO THE
GREENHOUSE
IS OPEN.

I'M NOT SURE HOW
YOU DID THAT, BUT I'M
A LITTLE CREEPED
OUT.

AND
GUARDS OF
THE GREAT
HELM DON'T
GET CREEPED
OUT EASILY.

I AM ALSO
UNCERTAIN OF WHAT'S
HAPPENING, BUT I MIGHT
HAVE A CONCUSSION.



WELL...G...
G...G...GUYS.
LET'S GO AHEAD
AND DELIVER
THAT POTION,
RIGHT?

RIGHT! I
SHALL LEAD AS IT
APPEARS DARK IN
THERE AND I HAVE
MY GLOPAZ
NECKLACE.

STAY CLOSE
TO ME, PLEASE,
SOMNAMBULA.

VERILY, I ENJOY
THAT WE ARE ALREADY
COMMUNICATING SO
WELL AS A TEAM.



I HAVE A
BAD FEELING
ABOUT THIS.

I DO NOT. CHEER UP,
STYGIAN! WHAT COULD
GO WRONG IN A
GREENHOUSE?

WHAT
INDEED.



GOOD MOVE
GETTING US IN HERE,
MEADOWBROOK. I
SUSPECT I COULD HAVE
BEEN KICKING AT THAT
DOOR ALL DAY.

THANKS,
BUT WAIT TO
CONGRATULATE ME
UNTIL WE GET OUT
OF HERE.

WAIT, WHY
WOULDN'T WE
GET OUT OF
HERE?



WHERE DO YOU
SUPPOSE WOULD BE
THE BEST PLACE TO...
UMMM... PUT THIS
POTION?

I'M SURE
THERE'S PROBABLY
A WORK STATION
OR SOMETHING,
RIGHT?

RIGHT. MAYBE
THAT WILL GIVE US
SOME INDICATION
OF... WHERE SHE
WANTED IT.



WAIT. WHAT'S
ALL THIS ABOUT
THIS POTION?

FLASH, YOU'RE
STILL OUT OF IT,
LEAVE THIS—

NO! WE WERE
SUPPOSED TO BE
HERE TO—

FLASH
MAGNUS!

—RECRUIT
MISTMARE TO
COME HELP
US!



EVERYPONY
RUN!



SLAM!



FLASH, I
WAS TRYING
TO WARN
YOU!

I'M SORRY, I
JUST CRASHED
HEADFIRST INTO
A BUILDING.

I DIDN'T
CATCH YOUR
SUBTLE HINT.



AH, NOW I
COMPREHEND!
THE PLANTS WERE
OBSTRUCTING OUR
ENTRANCE!

THIS ONE'S
AFTER THE GROWTH
POTION! GET AWAY
FROM ME!

SIGH
GUYS, WE HAVE
TO FIND MISTMARE.
SHE'S THE ONLY
ONE WHO CAN
STOP THEM.



THAT MUST BE
IT! ROCKHOOF,
FOLLOW ME!

HUH?
WHERE?

BRING YOUR
SHOVEL!



THAT PLANT IS
GLOWING! I BET YOU IT'S
GOT MISTMANE!

AND HOW ARE
WE GONNA GET
HER OUT?

YOU'RE GONNA
PRY IT OPEN WITH
YOUR SHOVEL!



HEY! LET
GO OF
ME!

FLASH!



STUFF!

GET ME
OUT OF
HERE!



ALMOST
THERE!

I'VE BEAT A
VOLCANO TWICE. I'M
NOT ABOUT TO GO
DOWN FIGHTING
PLANTS.





OH, HELLO.
I SEE YOU ALL
HAVE MADE IT
AT LAST.

WE...
HUH?

YOU KNEW
WE WERE
COMING?



WELL, MAKING
AND PRESERVING
THE BEAUTY OF
THIS LAND IS MY
BUSINESS.

WHEN THINGS
ARE AMISS, I TEND
TO FIND OUT, BE IT
FROM THE PLANTS,
ANIMALS, OR PONIES
LIKE YOURSELF.



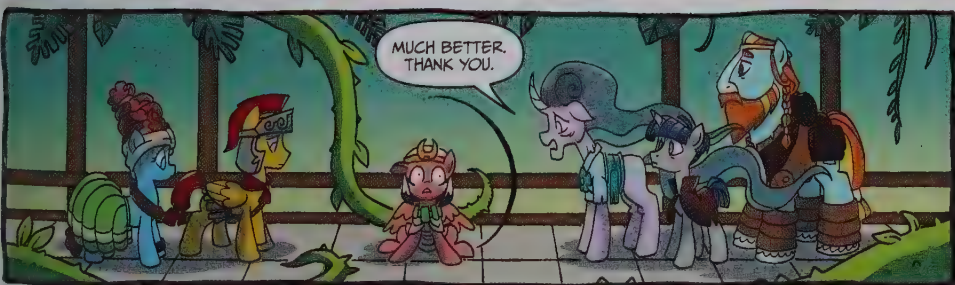
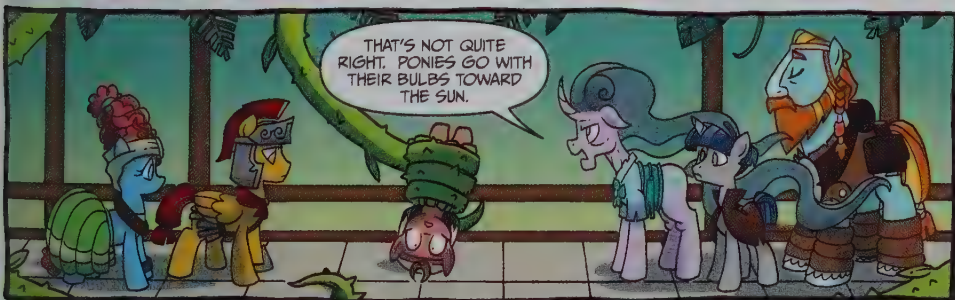
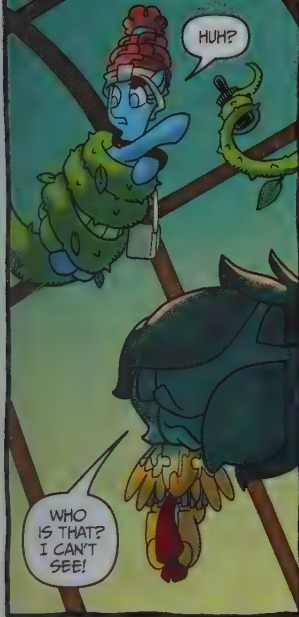
YOU CAN TALK
TO THE PLANTS?
DO YOU THINK MAYBE
YOU CAN CALL THESE
FELLAS OFF
THEN?

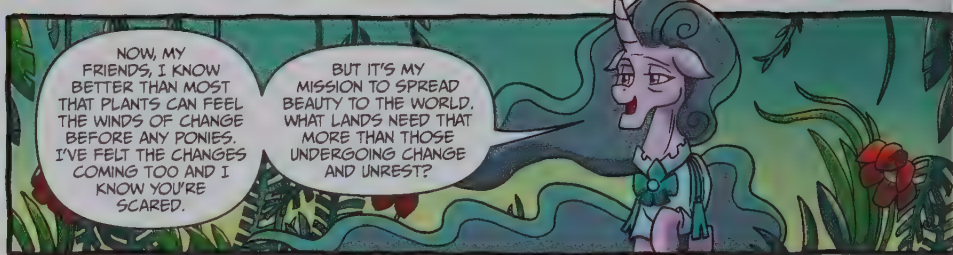
OH, OF
COURSE. THEY
DON'T MEAN TO BE
HOSTILE. THEY'RE
JUST WORRIED
ABOUT ME
LEAVING.

PARDON ME,
=AHEM=



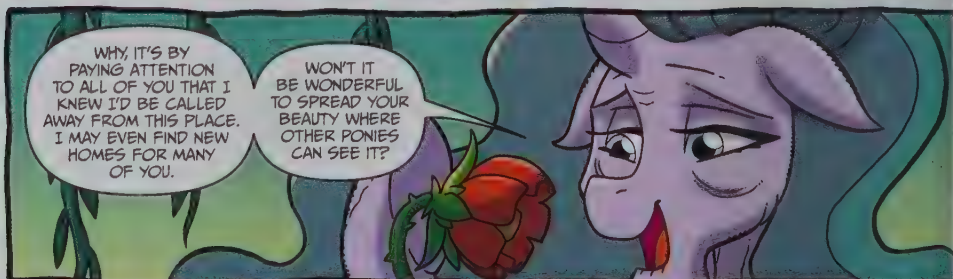
EVERYPONY
AND PLANT
STOP!





NOW, MY FRIENDS, I KNOW BETTER THAN MOST THAT PLANTS CAN FEEL THE WINDS OF CHANGE BEFORE ANY PONIES. I'VE FELT THE CHANGES COMING TOO AND I KNOW YOU'RE SCARED.

BUT IT'S MY MISSION TO SPREAD BEAUTY TO THE WORLD. WHAT LANDS NEED THAT MORE THAN THOSE UNDERGOING CHANGE AND UNREST?



WHY, IT'S BY PAYING ATTENTION TO ALL OF YOU THAT I KNEW I'D BE CALLED AWAY FROM THIS PLACE. I MAY EVEN FIND NEW HOMES FOR MANY OF YOU.

WON'T IT BE WONDERFUL TO SPREAD YOUR BEAUTY WHERE OTHER PONIES CAN SEE IT?



THERE YOU ARE, THAT'S THE SPIRIT. I'LL BE BACK IN NO TIME.

HEY, YOU'RE THE GUY WHO KNOWS ALL THE LEGENDS. HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF A PONY TALKING TO PLANTS BEFORE?

NOPE, THIS IS NEW TO ME.



WELL, THIS LOOKS LIKE QUITE THE GROUP WE HAVE HERE.

HOW DID YOU KNOW WE WOULD COME LOOKING FOR YOU?



OH, IT'S LESS ABOUT KNOWING AND MORE ABOUT FEELING. THERE'S BEEN A CHANGE IN NATURE RECENTLY, LIKE THE WORLD IS HOLDING ITS BREATH.

YOU SEEM LIKE THE LEADER. WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

WELL, I WAS GOING TO GO TO THE CASTLE OF THE TWO SISTERS TO FIND STARSWIRL THE BEARDED.

STARSWIRL? ISN'T HE A MYTH?



WELL, HE IS A GOOD CHOICE, BUT I'M AFRAID YOU WON'T FIND HIM AT THE CASTLE OF THE TWO SISTERS.

WHY NOT?

WELL, LET'S JUST SAY THAT HE AND I HAVE NEARLY MET BEFORE—

"—AT THE PRINCESSES' NEW CASTLE."

WOW, THIS CASTLE IS GOING TO BE AMAZING.

MARK MY WORDS, BEFORE LONG THIS'LL ALL BE A CITY. YOU WON'T EVEN RECOGNIZE IT.

THIS COULD BE THE SORT OF PLACE THAT REALLY UNITES EQUESTRIA, YA KNOW? BRINGS US ALL TOGETHER.

NEVER GONNA HAPPEN. PEGASI ARE ALWAYS GONNA BE ON OUR OWN.

YOU DO NOT HAVE ANY GIANT SNAKES HERE, DO YOU?

SHALL WE?

SO, WHERE ARE WE GOING TO FIND STARSWIRL?

HE'LL BE IN THE GARDENS. HE LIKES TO WORK THERE.

IT MADE IT REALLY DIFFICULT TO FINISH PLANTING THEM IN SECRET.

OH MY GOODNESS. THERE HE IS! **THE** STARSWIRL THE BEARDED.

HE'S MY HERO, YOU KNOW? I'VE READ ALL OF HIS BOOKS. PORED OVER ALL OF HIS RESEARCH. I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TALK TO HIM.

WELL, HE IS PACING A LINE IN MY BEAUTIFUL GRASS RIGHT THERE, WHY DON'T YOU GO TALK TO HIM NOW?

I CAN'T DO THAT! HE'S THE MOST IMPORTANT CONJURER OF THE MODERN ERA! HE PROPOSED THE IDEA OF AMNIOMORPHIC SPELLS. LAST I HEARD HE HAD CREATED OVER ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE SPELLS!

WELL, THEN HE SEEMS LIKE EXACTLY THE SORT OF PONY WHOSE HELP YOU NEED TO SAVE YOUR TOWN, YES?

OKAY. YES.



FROM ONE TO ANOTHER, ANOTHER TO ONE. A MARK OF ONE'S... PURPOSE?

NO, THAT'S NOT RIGHT!

EXCUSE ME, MR. THE BEARDED.



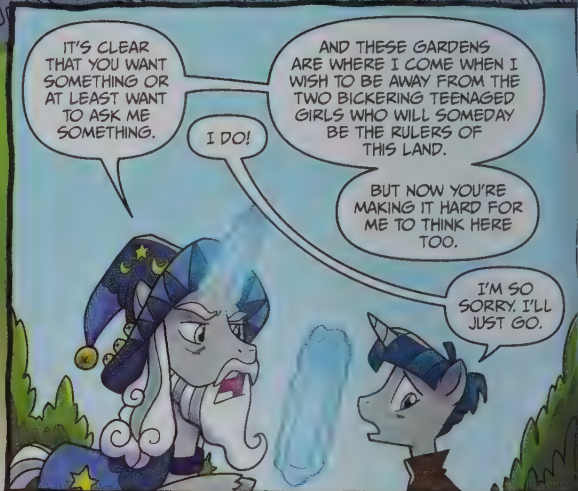
MR. THE BEARDED? OH, COME NOW, STARSWIRL WILL SUFFICE.

RIGHT, RIGHT.

I'M SORRY.

I DIDN'T MEAN—

YOUNG PONY, WILL YOU PLEASE JUST SPIT IT OUT?



IT'S CLEAR THAT YOU WANT SOMETHING OR AT LEAST WANT TO ASK ME SOMETHING.

I DO!

AND THESE GARDENS ARE WHERE I COME WHEN I WISH TO BE AWAY FROM THE TWO BICKERING TEENAGED GIRLS WHO WILL SOMEDAY BE THE RULERS OF THIS LAND.

BUT NOW YOU'RE MAKING IT HARD FOR ME TO THINK HERE TOO.

I'M SO SORRY. I'LL JUST GO.



WAIT!

THERE IS OBVIOUSLY SOMETHING IMPORTANT ON YOUR MIND OR YOU WOULDN'T HAVE COME ALL THIS WAY.

I'M SORRY TO BE IRRITABLE, IT'S JUST THAT I HAVE WRITTEN OVER ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY SPELLS AND I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO FINISH THIS ONE.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

WELL, IF I KNEW THAT, I'D HAVE FINISHED IT, WOULDN'T I?



SORRY, I DON'T MEAN TO SNAP. IT'S JUST... YOU SPEND ALL DAY AROUND TWO MOODY TEENAGERS WHO CAN ALTER THE FABRIC OF REALITY AND...

...I'M RAMBLING. WHAT WAS YOUR ISSUE?



IT'S JUST...
MY TOWN IS
IN GREAT
DANGER.



WHAT SORT OF
DANGER? AN URSA
MAJOR? A CENTAUR?
I WAS SURE I PUT THE
LAST OF THOSE IN
TARTARUS...



NO, SIR. THEY
CALL THEMSELVES
THE DAZZLINGS.
THEY'RE SIRENS.



SIRENS? I HAD
GIVEN UP ON FINDING AN
ACTUAL SIREN. I THOUGHT
PERHAPS THEY WERE
MYTHS.



I THOUGHT THE SAME
THING. I READ YOUR ENTRY ABOUT
THEM IN "STARSWIRL'S GUIDE TO
MAGICAL AND LEGENDARY
CREATURES."



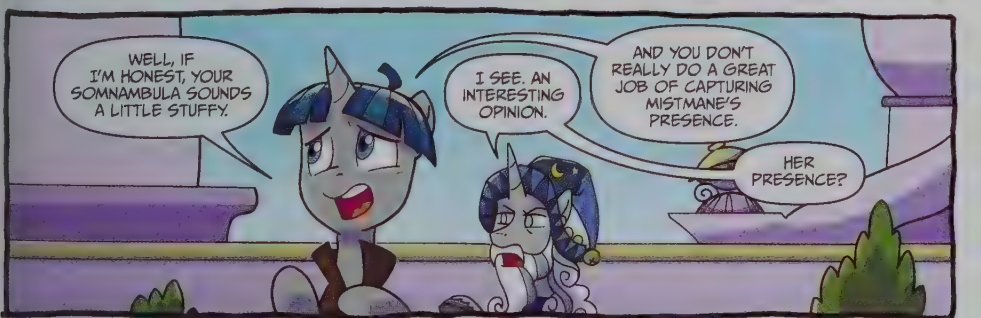
YOU DID?
WELL, WHAT ELSE
OF MINE HAVE
YOU READ?



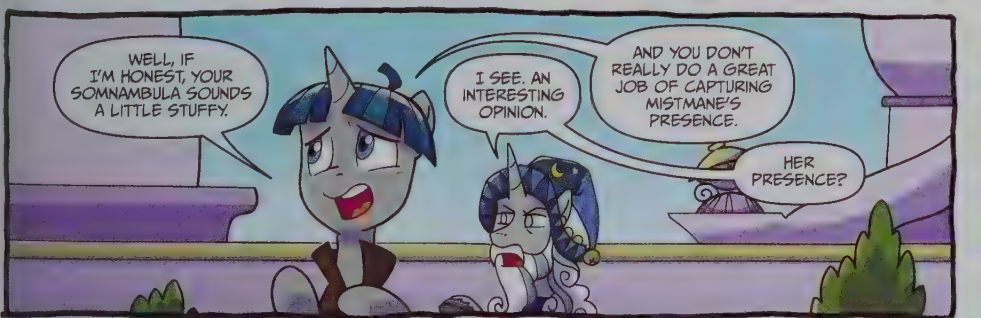
I'VE READ ALL
OF "THE GREAT
HEROES OF
EQUESTRIA."



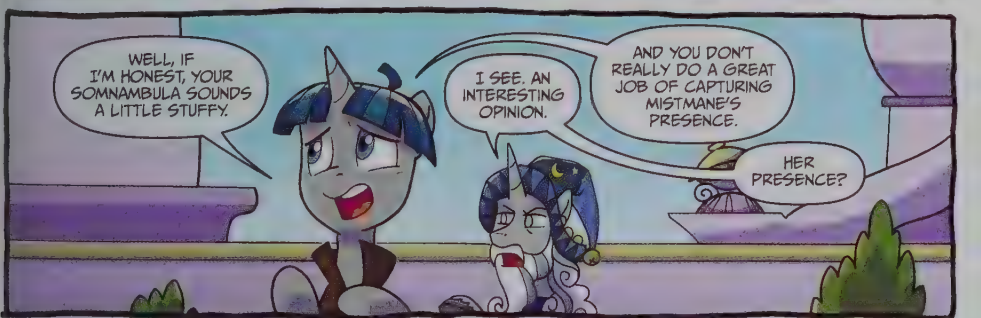
YOU DID?
WHAT DID YOU
THINK?



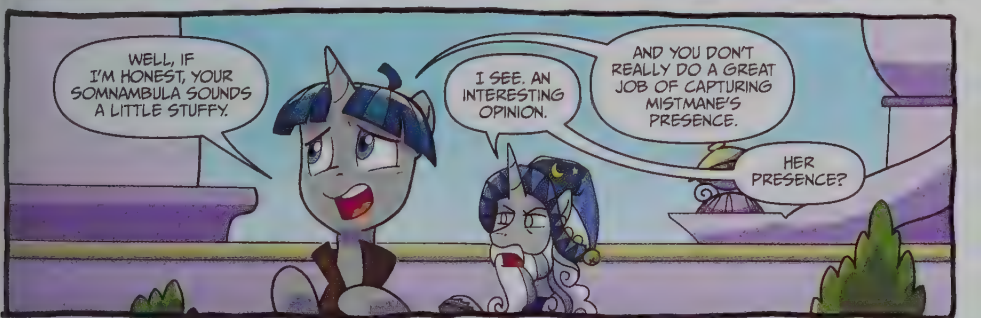
WELL, IF
I'M HONEST, YOUR
SOMNAMBULA SOUNDS
A LITTLE STUFFY.



I SEE, AN
INTERESTING
OPINION.



AND YOU DON'T
REALLY DO A GREAT
JOB OF CAPTURING
MISTMANE'S
PRESENCE.



HER
PRESENCE?



WELL, IT FEELS
LIKE MISTMANE HAS A
SORT OF BEAUTIFUL
CALMING PRESENCE, LIKE
THE LIGHT OF HER MAGIC
IS COMFORTING,
YOU KNOW?



APPARENTLY
I DO NOT.



AND MAGE
MEADOWBROOK!
SHE'S SO KIND HEARTED
AND SPIRITED. YOU JUST
WANT TO BE HER
FRIEND.



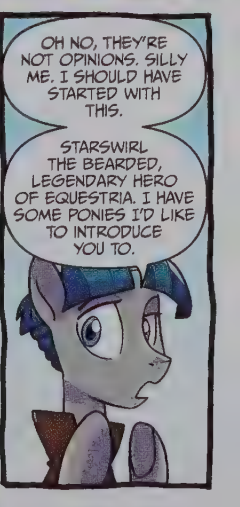
AND
ROCKHOOF
MAKES YOU FEEL
LIKE HIS LITTLE
BROTHER AS
SOON AS YOU
MEET HIM.



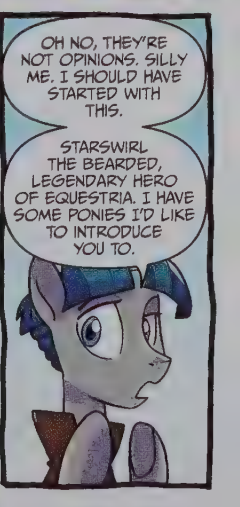
AND FLASH MAGNUS
SEEMS COCKY, BUT YOU
KNOW HE WOULD PUT
HIMSELF AND HIS SHIELD
BETWEEN YOU AND
ANY DANGER.



WELL... YOU
CERTAINLY DO HAVE
SOME STRONG OPINIONS
ABOUT THESE MYTHICAL
HEROES. MAYBE YOU
SHOULD WRITE A
BOOK.



OH NO, THEY'RE
NOT OPINIONS. SILLY
ME. I SHOULD HAVE
STARTED WITH
THIS.



STARSWIRL
THE BEARDED,
LEGENDARY HERO
OF EQUESTRIA. I HAVE
SOME PONIES I'D LIKE
TO INTRODUCE
YOU TO.



**MEET THE
LEGENDARY HEROES
OF EQUESTRIA.**

EVERYPONY,
THIS IS STARSWIRL
THE BEARDED.

Art by Brenda Hickey



Art by Tony Fleecs



This is a tale of the heroes of Equestria.

However, there is one very important thing to remember about me.

I am not a hero.

STARSWIRL?

I have never had any special powers. I've never really done anything noteworthy.

I am a scholar.

THE LEGENDARY HEROES OF EQUESTRIA. THEY'RE... THEY'RE ALL HERE.

This particular year, I had chosen to study legendary heroes.

It was an important subject to me. My town was in danger and I needed heroes capable of taking on the largest threat that Equestria had ever faced.

ROCKHOOF.

FLASH MAGNUS.

MAGE MEADOWBROOK.

MISTMANE.

AND SOMNAMBULA.

But, as scholars so often do, I forgot the most commonly understood knowledge about the thing I was studying.

You should never meet your heroes.

YOU'RE ALL REAL! I THOUGHT SOME OF YOU MIGHT BE, BUT I NEVER GUESSED EVERY ONE OF YOU WAS!

I HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS! I NEED MY NOTEBOOK! I NEED LOTS OF NOTEBOOKS! I NEED TO KNOW MORE STORIES ABOUT YOUR LIVES!

WELL, MR. STARSWIRL, I THINK THERE WILL BE TIME FOR THAT LATER. IT SEEMS TO ME WE SHOULD SEE TO STYGIAN'S PROBLEM FIRST.

RIGHT! RIGHT! STYGIAN'S PROBLEM. STYGIAN'S PROBLEM.

REMINDE ME, WHO'S STYGIAN AGAIN?

SLUMP

WHY, STYGIAN'S OUR FEARLESS LEADER! HE'S THE ONE THAT BROUGHT US ALL TOGETHER.

VERILY, IF NOT FOR HIM WE WOULD NEVER HAVE FOUND ONE ANOTHER.

HIS TOWN IS IN DANGER AND WHILE I TOLD HIM I COULD HAVE HANDLED IT ALONE, HE SEEMS TO THINK WE NEED YOU.

WE KNOW YOU'RE VERY BUSY STARSWIRL, BUT DO YOU SUPPOSE YOU COULD FIND THE TIME TO DO SOMETHING WORTHY OF YOUR LEGEND?

ON A QUEST? BUT YOU'RE SO OLD! WHAT IF THERE'S A STEEP HILL OR NARROW STAIRS?

YOU MIGHT BREAK A HIP!

YOUR CONCERN IS APPRECIATED, PRINCESS CELESTIA, BUT I ASSURE YOU THAT I WILL BE FINE.

BUT WHAT IF YOU'RE NOT? WHAT IF THERE'S A GREAT EVIL WIZARD AND HE TRAPS YOU IN HIS TOWER AND YOU CAN'T GET BACK TO US?

PRINCESS LUNA, THERE ARE NO EVIL WIZARDS.

BUT IT MUST BE DANGEROUS! YOU WON'T TELL US WHERE YOU'RE GOING AND YOU WOULD ONLY DO THAT IF IT WAS DANGEROUS!

YOU GIRLS WORRY TOO MUCH.

I AM TAKING A SHORT TRIP TO THE SEASIDE WITH A FEW FRIENDS. IT'S WHAT WE OLD PONIES DO.

YOU HAVE FRIENDS?

FOR YOUR INFORMATION, YES, I DO KNOW PONIES WHO ARE NOT TEENAGE PRINCESSES.

THOUGH YOU'D HARDLY KNOW IT.

POOF

POOF

YOU PROMISE YOU'LL BE BACK SOON?

I MEAN, IF YOU DIDN'T I'D BE FINE... BUT YOU KNOW HOW LUNA GETS.

YES, GIRLS, I PROMISE.



SO, EXPLAIN
THIS TO ME AGAIN.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH
THIS CASTLE?

NOTHING IS
WRONG WITH IT.
IT'S MERELY NOT A
SUITABLE SEAT FOR
THE PRINCESSES OF
EQUESTRIA.

I DON'T KNOW.
I'M A LOT MORE
COMFORTABLE WITH
THIS THAN THAT GIANT
MONSTROSITY ON
THE MOUNTAIN.



SPEAKING FOR
PEGASI, I HATE TRYING
TO FLY THROUGH A
FOREST. I GET STICKS
IN MY WINGS.

I AGREE WITH
FLASH MAGNUS.
ADDITIONALLY, THE
OTHER CASTLE IS
PRETTY.

WHAT DO
YOU THINK,
STYGIAN?

I—



GOODNESS, I
HAD TO TELEPORT
JUST TO GET AWAY
FROM THOSE
GIRLS.

I THINK IT'S
BEST IF WE
AVOID THAT.

I'M SURE
THEY'RE SWEET.
MAYBE I COULD
FOAL SIT FOR YOU
SOMETIME.



WHY'S
THAT?

EVENTUALLY,
PROTECTING THIS
KINGDOM IS GOING
TO FALL SOLELY TO THE
TWO OF THEM.

EVEN IF WE ARE
ABLE TO FACE SOME
PROBLEMS OURSELVES,
IT'S BEST IF THEY DON'T
KNOW THIS LITTLE
GROUP EXISTS.

SOMETHING LIKE
THIS CAN'T LAST
FOREVER.

We had spent so much of the time traveling. From my town to Rockhoof's volcano.

From the volcano to Meadowbrook's swamp.

From the swamp to Flash's fortress.

To southern Equestria.

To the greenhouse.

To the castle.

NOW ROCKHOOF, ONE THING I MUST KNOW, IS THIS THE SAME SHOVEL YOU ALWAYS USE OR ARE THEY A SERIES OF SHOVELS?

OH NO, I MAKE EM ALL BY HAND, BUT THERE'S BEEN A FEW. MY FIRST WAS BURNED BY A BABY CHERUFE.

I MUST HEAR THAT STORY.

AND YOU CURED THE WHOLE TOWN OF ZOMBIES WITH THIS POTION?

WELL, THEY WEREN'T **ACTUAL** ZOMBIES.

I NEED TO WRITE THIS DOWN!

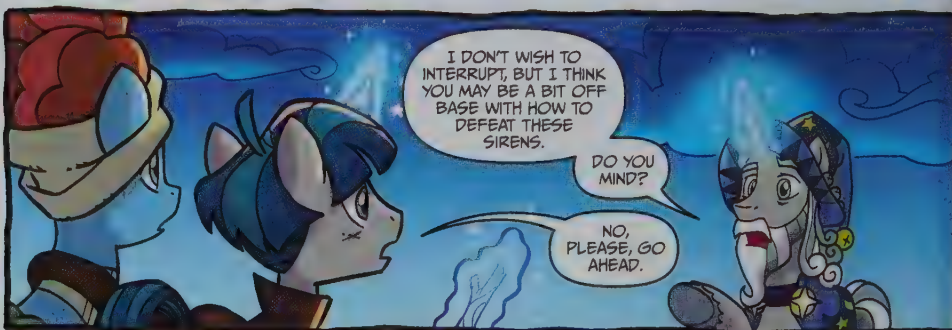
THE INSIDE OF THE SNAKE? HOW DID YOU SEE ANYTHING?

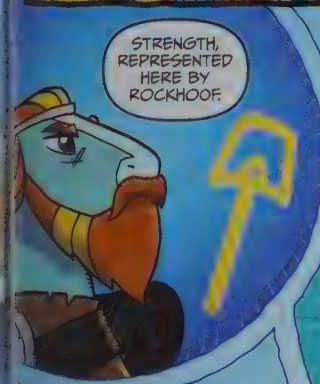
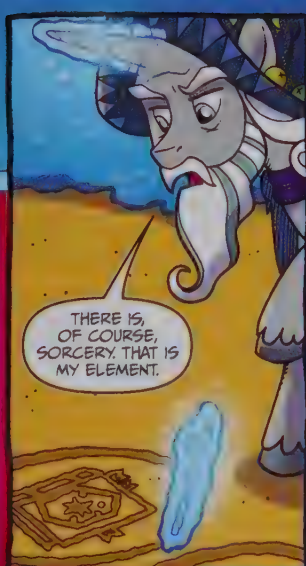
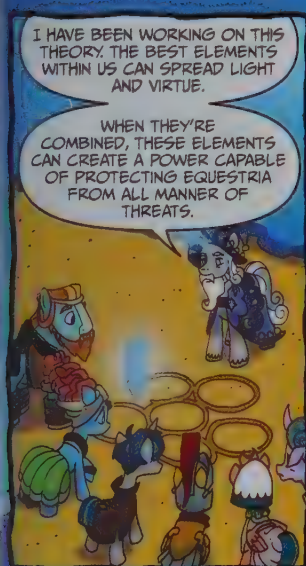
MY NECKLACE IS GLOPAZ, IT LET ME SEE EVERYTHING.

But now, this was different.

STYGIAN?









—STYGIAN?

AN INTERESTING QUESTION. IT HAD NEVER OCCURRED TO ME THAT THERE MIGHT BE A SEVENTH PART TO ALL OF THIS.

YOUNG PONY, WHAT IS IT YOU BRING TO THIS GROUP?



ME? I... WHAT DO I BRING?

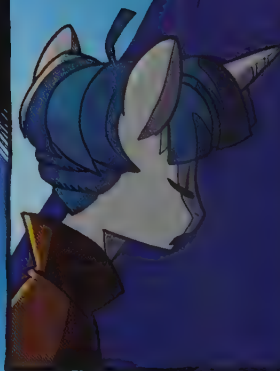
DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL POWER? SOMETHING HIDDEN WITHIN THAT YOU HAVEN'T SHOW US YET?

SPECIAL...?



NO, MR. STARSWIRL, THERE'S NOTHING SPECIAL ABOUT ME.

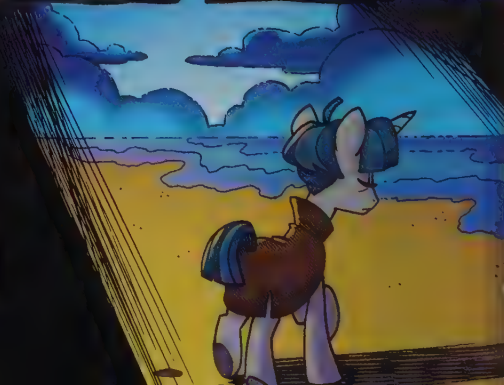
I'M NOT A HERO.



That's the first time I said it out loud. I think.

At least the first time I really believed it.

I had nothing to offer.



NOT TO WORRY,
YOUNG PONY. NOT EVERY
PONY IS MEANT TO BE A
HERO. MOST ARE
NOT.

IT'S
NOTHING TO
BE ASHAMED
OF.



HOLD ON NOW,
IT WAS STYGIAN
THAT BROUGHT US
TOGETHER!

YEAH, IF IT
HAD BEEN UP
TO ME I NEVER
WOULD HAVE
LEFT MY
SWAMP.



AND FOR MY
BITS, HE'S AS BRAVE
AS NEARLY ANY PONY. HE'S
NOT A SOLDIER, BUT HE
PUT HIMSELF OUT THERE
TO RECRUIT US.



INDEED, THERE
IS SOMETHING QUITE BEAUTIFUL
ABOUT STYGIAN. ALL OF US FACED
OBSTACLES AND COULD HAVE GIVEN
UP. STYGIAN HAS PUT HIMSELF IN
DANGER FOR EACH AND
EVERY ONE OF US.

THAT IS RIGHT!
STYGIAN IS WHAT
BROUGHT US TOGETHER
AND WHAT HOLDS US
TOGETHER NOW.

IF HE HAD AN
ELEMENT IT WOULD
BE... WELL... PERHAPS
IT'S NOT SOMETHING WE
ASSOCIATE WITH A
LEGEND...

...BUT I THINK
IT WOULD BE
FRIENDSHIP.



AND
FRIENDSHIP...
FRIENDSHIP
IS...





...WELL IT'S NOT NOTHING!

FRIENDSHIP IS IMPORTANT.

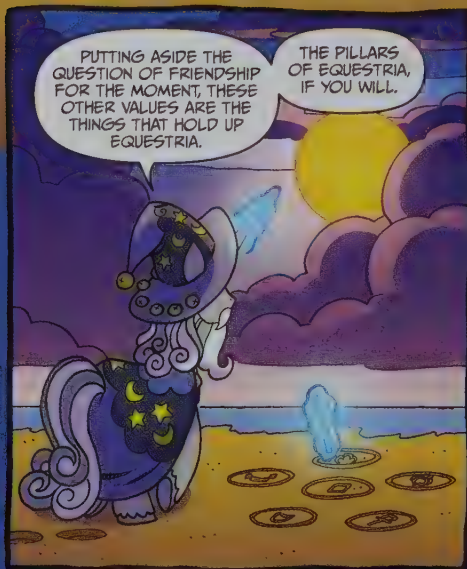


YEAH! GET IN HERE, LITTLE FELLA.

Y'ALL CAN'T GO GETTING SAD! WE'RE SO CLOSE NOW.

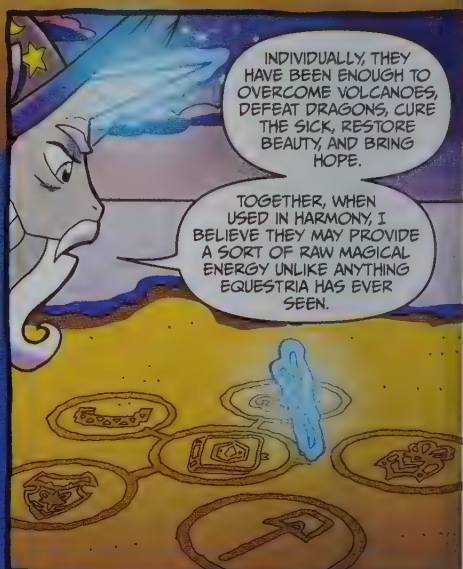
IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU, I'D BE FIGHTING DRAGONS RIGHT NOW.

THANKS, EVERYPONY. WE REALLY SHOULD GET TO SAVING MY TOWN THOUGH.



PUTTING ASIDE THE QUESTION OF FRIENDSHIP FOR THE MOMENT, THESE OTHER VALUES ARE THE THINGS THAT HOLD UP EQUESTRIA.

THE PILLARS OF EQUESTRIA, IF YOU WILL.



INDIVIDUALLY, THEY HAVE BEEN ENOUGH TO OVERCOME VOLCANOES, DEFEAT DRAGONS, CURE THE SICK, RESTORE BEAUTY, AND BRING HOPE.

TOGETHER, WHEN USED IN HARMONY, I BELIEVE THEY MAY PROVIDE A SORT OF RAW MAGICAL ENERGY UNLIKE ANYTHING EQUESTRIA HAS EVER SEEN.



THAT IS FANTASTIC, STARSWIRL. AND WITH THAT AMOUNT OF POWER, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO COUNTERACT THE DAZZLINGS.

THEN WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO TALK SENSE TO THEM. WE CAN HELP THEM CHANGE.

I'M AFRAID NOT.



I HAVE DEVOTED MY LIFE TO THE STUDY OF MAGIC. I CREATED AMNIOMORPHIC MAGIC AS WE KNOW IT.

I CAN CHANGE THE SHAPE OF A PONY, BUT I CANNOT CHANGE THEIR MIND.



THESE DAZZLINGS... THEY ARE VERY POWERFUL AND VERY EVIL.

BUT I HOPE WE—

I'M AFRAID WE CAN NOT DEPEND ON HOPE THIS TIME, SOMNAMBULA. THESE CREATURES MUST BE DEALT WITH FOR GOOD.



I'M A HEALER, STARSWIRL. I PROTECT AND HELP PONIES.

I'M NOT GOING TO HELP YOU DESTROY THESE CREATURES. EVIL OR NOT.

DESTROY?



SOMETHING SO DRASTIC WOULD ONLY BE A LAST RESORT. BUT I DO NOT BELIEVE ANYTHING SO DRASTIC WILL BE NECESSARY.

FROM WHAT STYGIAN HAS TOLD ME, THEY FEED ON THE MAGIC OF OTHER PONIES. ALL WE NEED TO DO IS SEPARATE THEM FROM MAGIC.

I DON'T KNOW...

PERHAPS SEPARATION IS THE BEST WE CAN HOPE FOR.

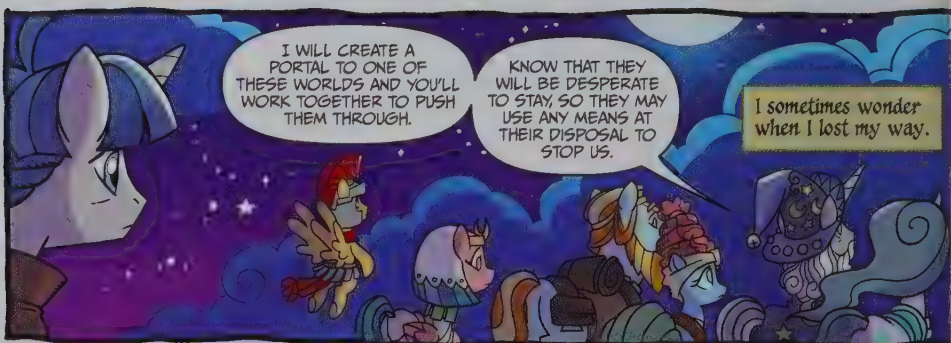
I'M NOT HEARING OTHER IDEAS.

THIS IS STYGIAN'S TOWN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT. PERHAPS HE SHOULD DECIDE.

I AGREE. I'LL DO WHAT STYGIAN DECIDES.

WHAT WILL IT BE, YOUNG PONY?

YOU SOUGHT MY SORCERY AND WISDOM. WILL YOU NOW TURN AWAY FROM IT?





FIRST, MEADOWBROOK HAS CREATED A POTION FOR ALL OF YOU WHICH WILL ALLOW YOU TO WITHSTAND THE MAGIC OF THE DAZZLING'S FOR A SHORT TIME.

ON THAT NOTE, THIS WILL NEED TO BE AN EFFICIENT ATTACK.



THIS POTION REQUIRES A PRETTY RARE PLANT, SO WE'RE ONLY GOING TO HAVE ONE SHOT AT THIS.

THE ONLY OTHER OPTION WAS TO MAKE YOU DEAF AND... THEN WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE.



AND BECAUSE WE HAD SO LITTLE, STARSWIRL SAID I SHOULD MAKE EVERYONE ELSE'S A LITTLE STRONGER RATHER THAN MAKING ONE FOR YOU, STYGIAN.

YOU UNDERSTAND, RIGHT?

YEAH. HE'S RIGHT.

IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE ANY POWERS.



This quest... changed me. I had only ever wanted to study.

I accepted that I was not a hero.



STYGIAN, IF WE SHOULD FAIL, I AM COUNTING ON YOU TO RETURN TO THE PRINCESSES AND TELL THEM WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

BUT BY NO MEANS ARE THEY TO COME HERE AND ATTEMPT TO RESCUE ME. UNDERSTOOD?

YES, STARSWIRL, I UNDERSTAND.



I said that phrase far more than I ever imagined I would in those days.

But then, in all the time I spent guessing, I never imagined I'd be standing to the side watching my friends fight my battle.

But Starswirl knew this was necessary.

And Starswirl knows best. doesn't he?

PILLARS OF EQUESTRIA—



—LET US
SHOW THESE
FOUL CREATURES
WHAT WE CAN
DO!



FOUL CREATURES? SHALL WE SHOW THEM WHO THEY'RE UP AGAINST, SISTERS?

LET'S DO IT, SISTER!

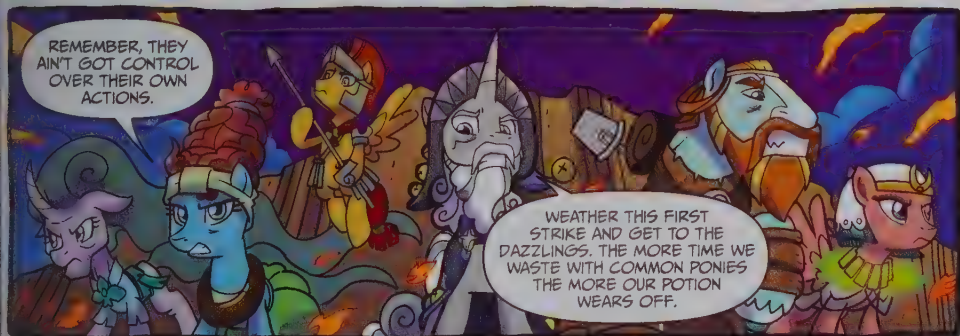
I WANNA GIVE THE COMMAND! GET 'EM, PONIES!



YAR!

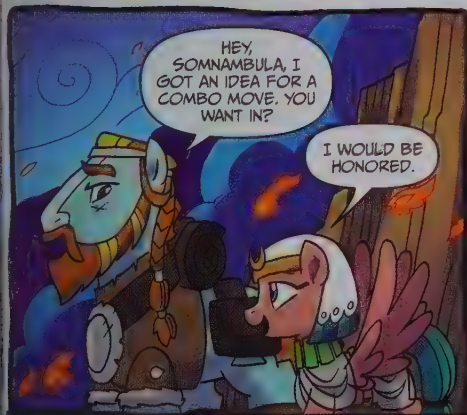
GET 'EM!

DON'T LET THEM HURT OUR QUEENS!



REMEMBER, THEY AIN'T GOT CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN ACTIONS.

WEATHER THIS FIRST STRIKE AND GET TO THE DAZZLINGS. THE MORE TIME WE WASTE WITH COMMON PONIES THE MORE OUR POTION WEARS OFF.



HEY, SOMNAMBULA. I GOT AN IDEA FOR A COMBO MOVE. YOU WANT IN?

I WOULD BE HONORED.



HOW MUCH OF THAT SLEEPING DRAUGHT YOU GOT?

PLENTY, BUT I CAN'T HIT 'EM ALL AT ONCE.

WITH MY SPEED, I BET I CAN GET TO THE DAZZLINGS. THAT SHOULD HELP DISTRACT 'EM.



THERE YOU ARE.
FOLLOW THE BRIGHTLY
PATTERNED PEGASUS!

ROCKHOOF,
YOUR PLAN IS
WORKING!

WOOSH

WATCH
THAT FIRST
STEP THERE,
FOLKS.

COME ON,
IS THIS THE
BEST YOU
CAN DO?

GET HIM!
GET THE FAST
ONE!

WELL, SHE
CERTAINLY PULLED
ENOUGH OF THEM
AWAY TO LIGHTEN
MY LOAD.

STARSWIRL, IF
YOU'RE GOING TO CAST
THIS SPELL, I RECKON
NOW IS THE TIME
FOR IT.

INDEED.



They really
were amazing.

The pillars of Equestria,
as Starswirl called them.

They were the best ponykind had
to offer and I had brought them
together here for one great battle.

And as I watched them push those
Sirens through the portal, only
two thoughts crossed my mind.

The first was "I did it.
I helped save my town."

But the second...
the second was
different.

The second thought was...

...I SHOULD
BE DOWN
THERE.

And that thought rung in my
head for months after that day.

Since that day, I've devoted myself
to finding a way in which I might
become a hero in my own right.

But I think I've finally found
something that can allow me to
become a hero like my friends.

It's simple enough, I think. All I need is to borrow
the symbol of each of their strengths. This ritual
should allow me to something amazing.

And then I can stop hearing those four words
repeating in my head. I can stop writing them
in every story I tell about the pillars.

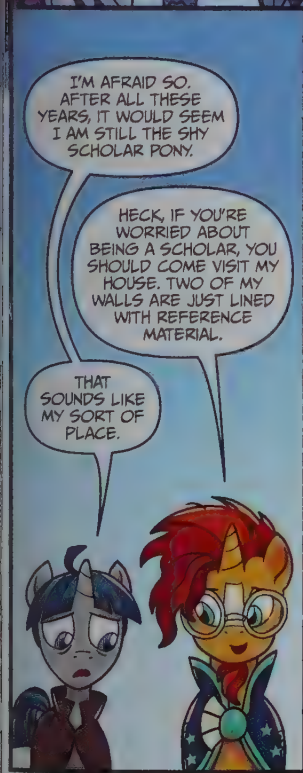
"I AM NO
HERO."

I HAVE
TO TALK
TO HIM.



I'M GLAD YOU READ IT. NOTHING MADE ME Madder WHEN I WAS THE PONY OF SHADOWS THAN THINKING THAT NO ONE WOULD EVER KNOW MY SIDE.

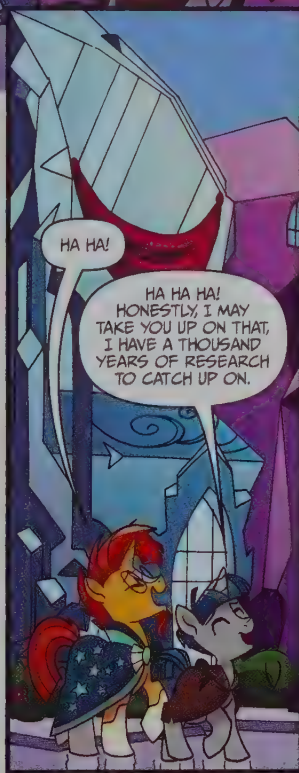
IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE ACCOUNT. IT WAS YOU THAT LEFT IT FOR ME THEN?



I'M AFRAID SO. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, IT WOULD SEEM I AM STILL THE SHY SCHOLAR PONY.

HECK, IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT BEING A SCHOLAR, YOU SHOULD COME VISIT MY HOUSE. TWO OF MY WALLS ARE JUST LINED WITH REFERENCE MATERIAL.

THAT SOUNDS LIKE MY SORT OF PLACE.



HA HA!

HA HA HA! HONESTLY, I MAY TAKE YOU UP ON THAT. I HAVE A THOUSAND YEARS OF RESEARCH TO CATCH UP ON.



I HAVE TO ASK YOU SOMETHING.

YOU HAVEN'T READ ENOUGH OF MY RAMBLINGS ALREADY?

I WANTED TO ASK ABOUT THE LAST THING YOU WROTE IN YOUR DIARY.

I SEE.



WELL, FOR ALL MY GOOD INTENTIONS, I CERTAINLY PROVED THOSE RIGHT, DIDN'T I?

ACTUALLY, THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS GOING TO SAY AT ALL.



I'VE READ THROUGH ALL OF THE LEGENDS, BOTH THE ORIGINALS AND STARSWIRL'S.

AND I READ YOUR JOURNAL COVER TO COVER.

SURE, YOU WERE JUST A SCHOLAR, BUT YOU SHOWED THE WISDOM TO TURN AWAY THE SIRENS.

WHEN YOUR TOWN WAS TAKEN OVER, YOU MADE IT YOUR MISSION TO SAVE IT.

YOUR PLANNING, STRATEGY, AND KNOWLEDGE WAS WHAT SAVED THE DAY FOR EACH OF YOUR FRIENDS AND CONVINCED THEM TO JOIN YOU.

AND NONE OF YOU QUITE UNDERSTOOD IT, BUT YOU BROUGHT THE ELEMENT OF FRIENDSHIP TO THE GROUP.

STYGIAN, YOU ARE A HERO.

IF THINGS HAD GONE DIFFERENTLY, YOU COULD HAVE BEEN PRINCESS TWILIGHT.



I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S TRUE, BUT IT MEANS THE WORLD TO ME THAT YOU THINK SO.

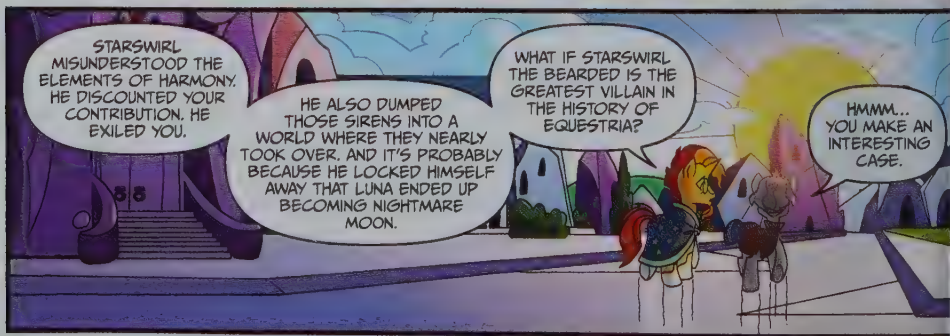
I DO.



YOU KNOW, YOU SAID THAT WAS THE LAST THING I WROTE IN MY DIARY. IT STRIKES ME THAT THAT IS ONLY TRUE OF THAT DIARY.

I LEFT THAT DIARY BEHIND WHEN I WENT INTO EXILE. I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D BE INTERESTED IN READING MY OTHER DIARY, WOULD YOU?

WOULD I EVER! I'VE ACTUALLY BEEN WORKING ON A THEORY, TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK!



STARSWIRL MISUNDERSTOOD THE ELEMENTS OF HARMONY. HE DISCOUNTED YOUR CONTRIBUTION. HE EXILED YOU.

HE ALSO DUMPED THOSE SIRENS INTO A WORLD WHERE THEY NEARLY TOOK OVER. AND IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE HE LOCKED HIMSELF AWAY THAT LUNA ENDED UP BECOMING NIGHTMARE MOON.

WHAT IF STARSWIRL THE BEARDED IS THE GREATEST VILLAIN IN THE HISTORY OF EQUESTRIA?

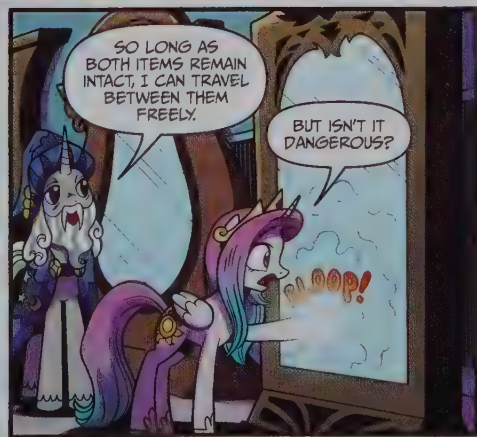
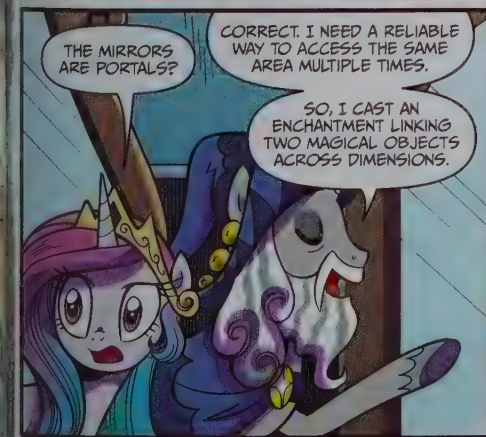
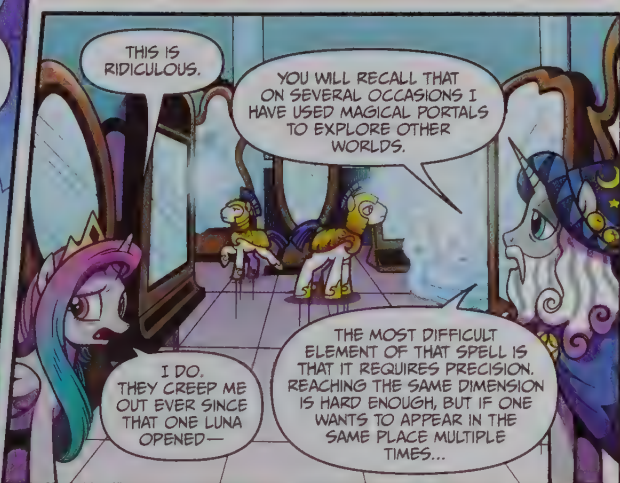
HHMM... YOU MAKE AN INTERESTING CASE.

Art by Brenda Hickey



Art by Brenda Hickey





SURELY OTHER DIMENSIONS CAN BE DANGEROUS, BUT NOT STUDYING THEM DOESN'T MAKE THEM LESS DANGEROUS.

I AM A FIRM BELIEVER THAT IT IS BETTER TO KNOW WHAT IS OUT THERE THAN TO HIDE OUR HEAD IN THE SAND, YOUNG PRINCESS.

AND THAT IS THE BENEFIT OF THE MIRRORS.

RATHER THAN AN OPEN DOORWAY IN MIDAIR, IT APPEARS TO BE A SOLID OBJECT. ONE CANNOT FIND IT UNLESS ONE KNOWS WHERE TO LOOK.

AFTER ALL, WHO WOULD GO AROUND TRYING EVERY TREE IN THE FOREST?

WE CANNOT LIVE OUR LIVES IN FEAR OF WHAT MAY FIND US. WE HAVE TO STRIVE TO REACH OUT AND EXPAND OUR KNOWLEDGE.

THAT IS SOMETHING I WANT YOU AND YOUR SISTER TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU RULE. A PRINCESS SHOULD ALWAYS WANT TO UNDERSTAND OTHERS.

BUT DON'T YOU WORRY THAT SOMETHING BAD WILL FIND US?

CELESTIA? STARSWIRL? ARE YOU UP HERE?

SQUAARK?!

THERE YOU ARE. I JUST CAN'T GET USED TO HOW BIG THIS PLACE IS. SAY, WHAT IS THIS ROOM ANYWAY? WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS?

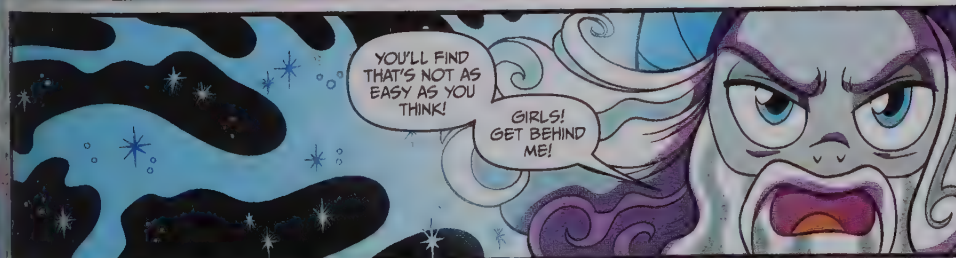
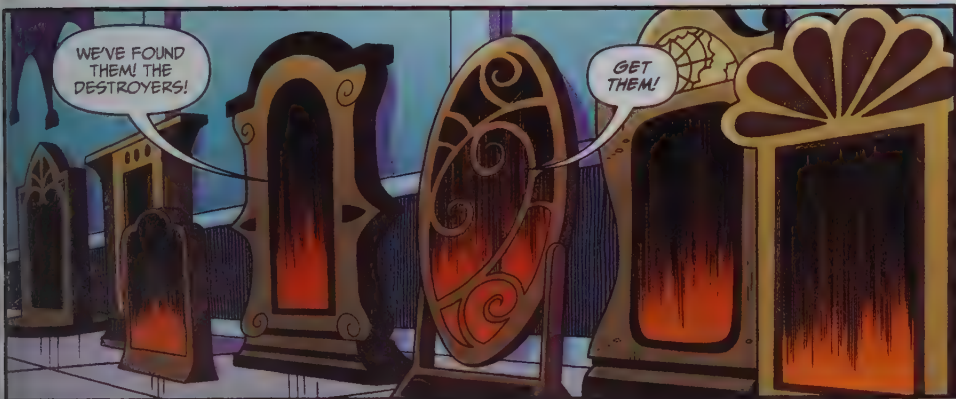
THEY'RE MIRRORS, LUNA. I KNOW YOU DON'T LOOK AT ONE VERY OFTEN, BUT I AT LEAST THOUGHT YOU'D RECOGNIZE THEM.

MIRRORS? ARE YOU SURE?

STRICTLY SPEAKING, YOUR SISTER IS CORRECT... BUT RUDE.

THEY ARE MIRRORS, BUT THEY—

IF THEY'RE MIRRORS, WHY AREN'T THEY REFLECTING ANYTHING?

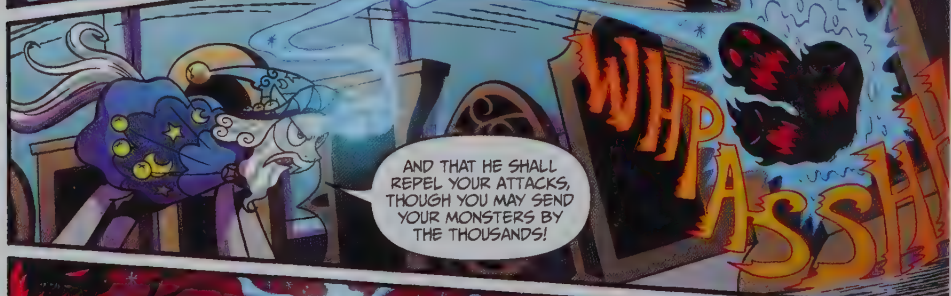




I KNOW
NOT WHEN YOU
CAME, BUT TODAY I
RETURN YOU THERE,
CREATURE!

AND WHEN YOU
ARRIVE THERE, LET
THEM KNOW THAT THIS
WORLD IS PROTECTED
BY STARSWIRL THE
BEARDED.

PSH
HH!



AND THAT HE SHALL
REPEL YOUR ATTACKS,
THOUGH YOU MAY SEND
YOUR MONSTERS BY
THE THOUSANDS!

WHP
ASSH



THERE IS NO
VICTORY HERE
FOR YOU!

GET
BACK, FOUL
CREATURES!

WE DO
NOT SEEK
VICTORY—

STARSWIRL,
HELP!



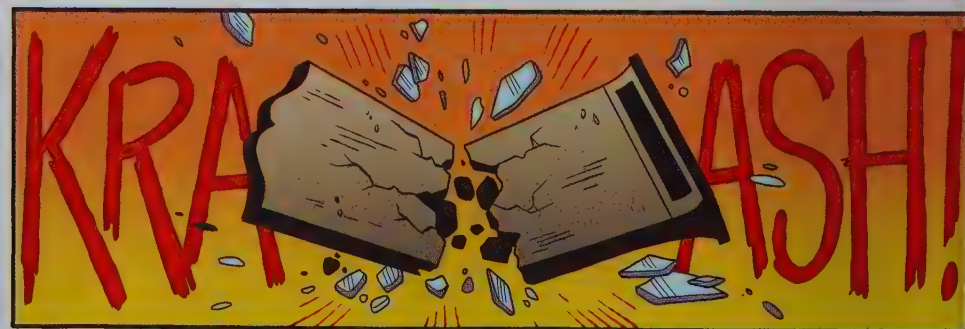
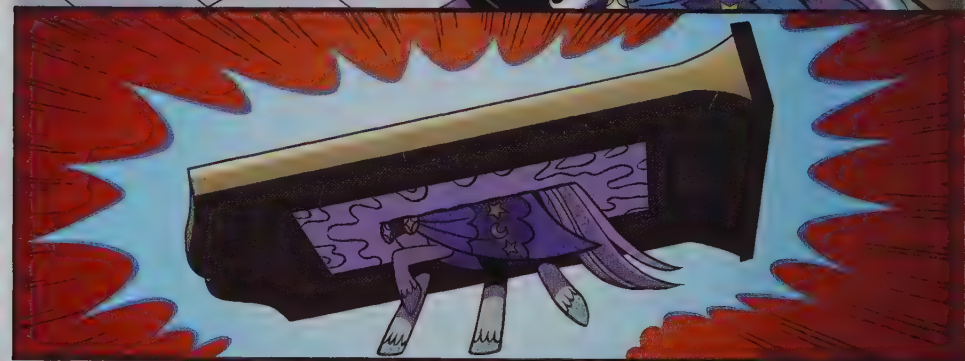
PLEASE, I
DON'T WANT TO
HURT YOU.

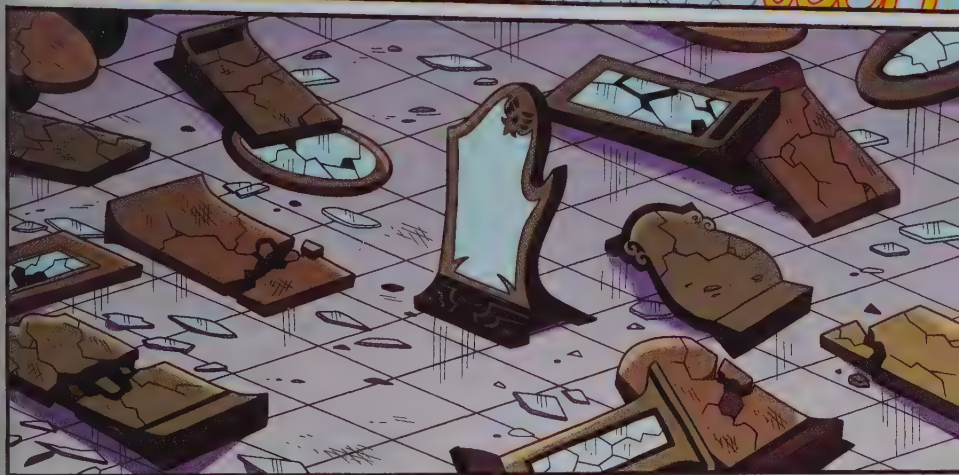
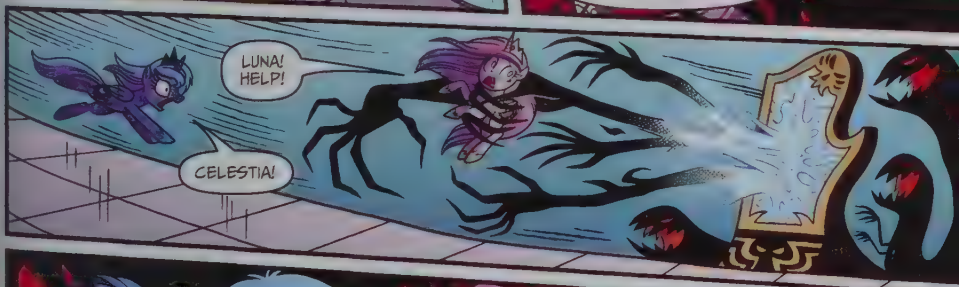
WE SEEK ONLY
DESTRUCTION!

OKAY,
MONSTERS,
THIS ENDS
NOW!

THESE
PRINCESSES
ARE UNDER
MY—

KAPOW





NORTHERN EQUESTRIA,
HOME VILLAGE OF THE
MIGHTY HELM.

AND ALSO, TODAY,
THE HOME OF THE
ROYAL LEGION.

EVERYPONY, WE
HAVE A VERY SPECIAL
OPPORTUNITY TODAY
AND YOU HAD BETTER
TAKE ADVANTAGE
OF IT.

NOW, AS YOU ALL
KNOW, THANKS TO THE
TREATY OF MEADOWBROOK,
WE ARE CURRENTLY AT PEACE
WITH THE DRAGONS FOR
THE FIRST TIME IN
YEARS.

HUZZAH!

NOW, AS YOU ALSO KNOW, THIS IS THE
FIRST TIME IN CAPTAIN IRONHEAD'S TIME
AS LEADER OF THE ROYAL LEGION THAT
WE HAVEN'T BEEN FIGHTING SOMEBODY.
SO HE'S TAKING SOME WELL-
EARNED TIME OFF.

WHERE'D HE
GO, SIR?

HE WOULDN'T TELL ME,
BUT I ASSURE YOU IT'S
FAR FROM HERE.

MEANWHILE, AT MAGE
MEADOWBROOK'S HOUSE IN THE
DEEPEST MOST IMPENETRABLE
HEART OF THE SWAMP.

AND THERE'S A
CANOPY HERE, SO NO
PEGASI CAN SEE ME
FROM OVERHEAD
EITHER!

HE LEFT ME
IN CHARGE, SO
RATHER THAN REST
ON OUR HAUNCHES, I
DECIDED TO BRING IN
ONE OF THE BRAVEST,
HARDEST WORKING,
AND SMARTEST
MILITARY MINDS
I KNOW.

PUT YOUR
HOEVES TOGETHER
FOR YOUR TRAINER
TODAY—

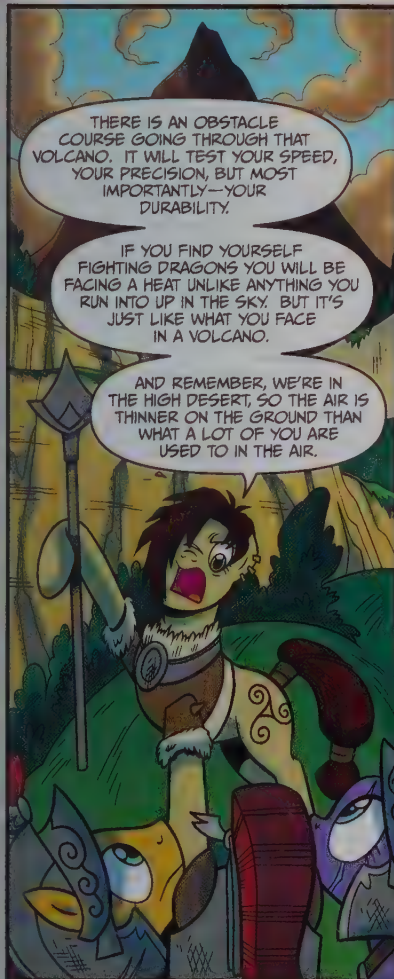
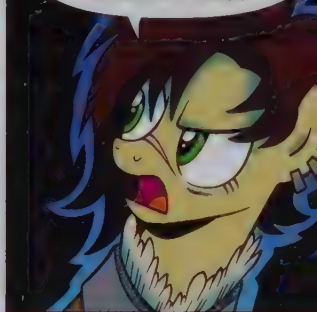


TAP TAP TAP
CAPTAIN OF THE
MIGHTY HELM, STEELA
DRESDOTTIR.

THAT'S ENOUGH!
CAN THE CLAPPING!
THIS AIN'T A TEA PARTY
AND I AIN'T A
PRINCESS!

MY SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN
WORKING TO MAKE YOU
A REAL OBSTACLE
COURSE.

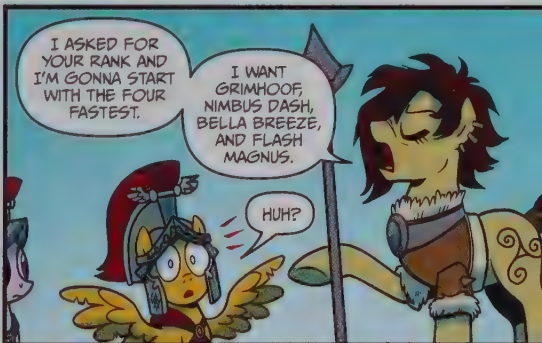
TODAY WE'RE GONNA
TEST YOUR METTLE UNDER THE
HARSHTEST CONDITIONS. BY THE
END OF THE DAY WE'LL KNOW
WHICH OF YOU ARE WARRIORS
AND WHICH ARE PRETTY
PRANCING PEGASII!



THERE IS AN OBSTACLE
COURSE GOING THROUGH THAT
VOLCANO. IT WILL TEST YOUR SPEED,
YOUR PRECISION, BUT MOST
IMPORTANTLY—YOUR
DURABILITY.

IF YOU FIND YOURSELF
FIGHTING DRAGONS YOU WILL BE
FACING A HEAT UNLIKE ANYTHING YOU
RUN INTO UP IN THE SKY. BUT IT'S
JUST LIKE WHAT YOU FACE
IN A VOLCANO.

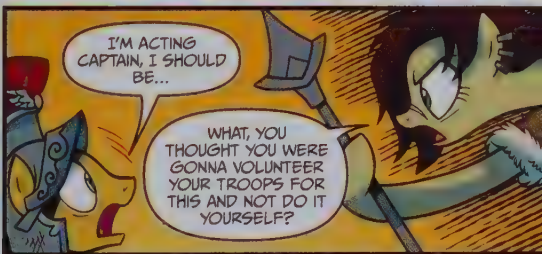
AND REMEMBER, WE'RE IN
THE HIGH DESERT, SO THE AIR IS
THINNER ON THE GROUND THAN
WHAT A LOT OF YOU ARE
USED TO IN THE AIR.



I ASKED FOR
YOUR RANK AND
I'M GONNA START
WITH THE FOUR
FASTEST.

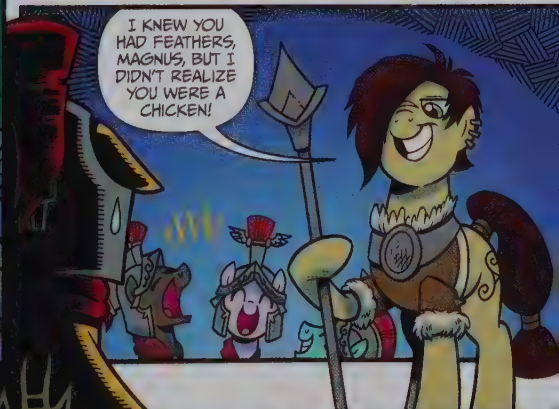
I WANT GRIMHOOF,
NIMBUS DASH,
BELLA BREEZE,
AND FLASH
MAGNUS.

HUH?



I'M ACTING
CAPTAIN, I SHOULD
BE...

WHAT, YOU
THOUGHT YOU WERE
GONNA VOLUNTEER
YOUR TROOPS FOR
THIS AND NOT DO IT
YOURSELF?

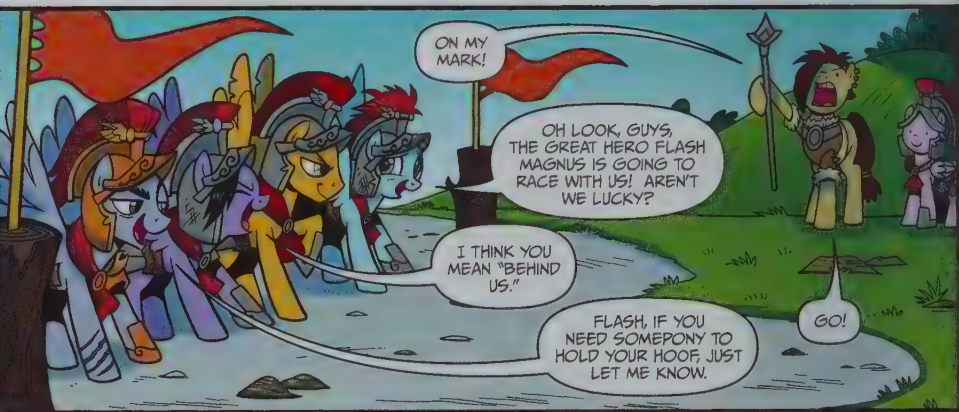


I KNEW YOU
HAD FEATHERS,
MAGNUS, BUT I
DIDN'T REALIZE
YOU WERE A
CHICKEN!



FINE, YOU
ALL WANNA SEE
HOW IT'S
DONE?

I'LL BE IN AND
OUT OF THAT VOLCANO
BEFORE THE REST OF
YOU MAKE IT OFF
THE GROUND!



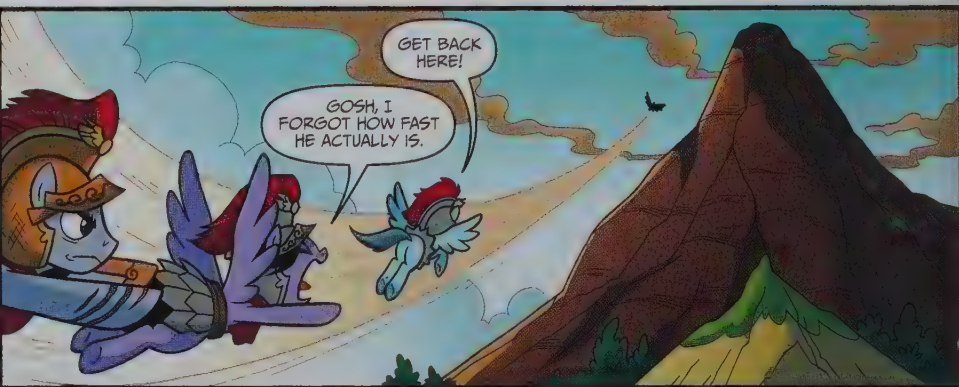
ON MY
MARK!

OH LOOK, GUYS,
THE GREAT HERO FLASH
MAGNUS IS GOING TO
RACE WITH US! AREN'T
WE LUCKY?

I THINK YOU
MEAN "BEHIND
US."

FLASH, IF YOU
NEED SOMEONY TO
HOLD YOUR HOOF, JUST
LET ME KNOW.

GO!



GET BACK
HERE!

GOSH, I
FORGOT HOW FAST
HE ACTUALLY IS.



WELP, THERE THEY GO. I TOLD FLASH THAT STEELA WAS GOING TO MAKE HIM WORK.

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD HEAD THAT WAY. SOMEONY IS BOUND TO NEED SOME HEALING.

WISH YA DIDN'T HAVE TO, I LIKE HAVING SOMEONY TO TALK TO WHEN I DIG.



NOW, I'LL BE BACK SOON, BUT YOU GOT STYGIAN AND MISTMARE TO KEEP YOU COMPANY.

THOSE TWO? THEY CAN'T STOP ARGUING LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW I'M HERE.

YEAH, BUT IT'S SUCH A POLITE ARGUMENT YOU'D HARDLY KNOW.



NOW, THIS SAYS THE IDEAL DISTANCE BETWEEN CORN IN VOLCANIC SOIL IS GOING TO BE NO LESS THAN THREE FEET APART.

WELL, I'M SURE THAT BOOK IS FULL OF WONDERFUL INSIGHTS, BUT I HAVE BEEN CREATING BEAUTIFUL GARDENS MY WHOLE LIFE.

I SEE WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM, BUT THESE ARE CROPS, NOT FLOWERS. THEY'RE PRACTICAL, NOT AESTHETIC.

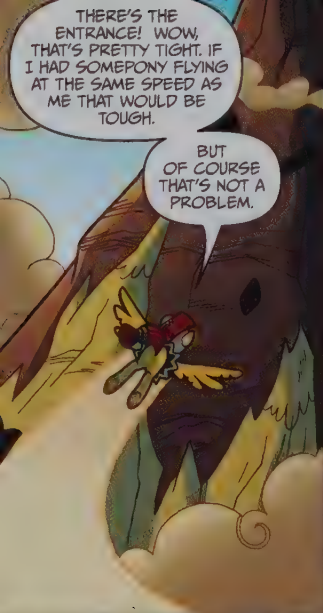
I WOULD ARGUE THAT THERE IS NOTHING NECESSARILY IMPRACTICAL ABOUT BEAUTY.



IT'S KINDA CUTE, IN A WAY.

IN A WAY THAT MAKES ME WANNA SHOVE CORN IN MY EARS!

WELL, I AT LEAST NEED TO MAKE SURE SOMNAMBULA IS OKAY UP THERE. I'LL BE BACK SOON!



THERE'S THE ENTRANCE! WOW, THAT'S PRETTY TIGHT. IF I HAD SOMEONY FLYING AT THE SAME SPEED AS ME THAT WOULD BE TOUGH.

BUT OF COURSE THAT'S NOT A PROBLEM.



HA, THOSE OTHER SUCKERS WILL NEVER CATCH UP TO ME!



WHEW, SURE IS HOT IN HERE!



YOU ARE DOING AN EXCELLENT JOB! CONTINUE YOUR SKILLFUL FLYING!

WHO?

SOMNAMBULA?

IT IS I! I AM HERE TO LEAD CHEERS AND PROVIDE ENCOURAGEMENT.

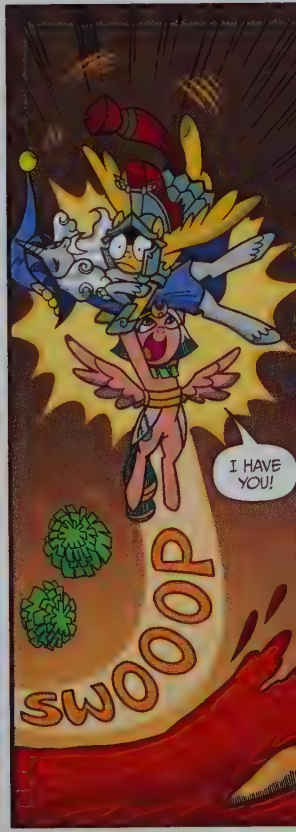
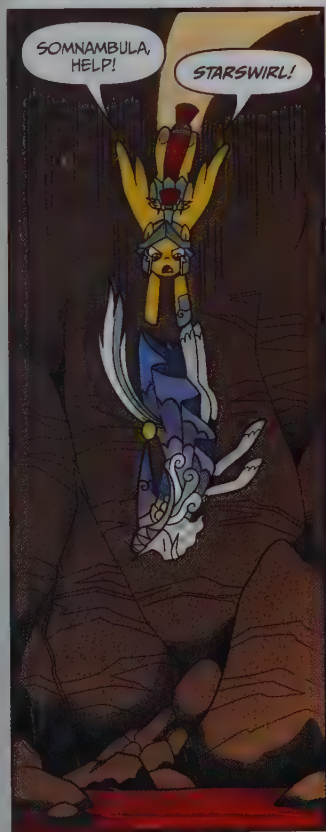
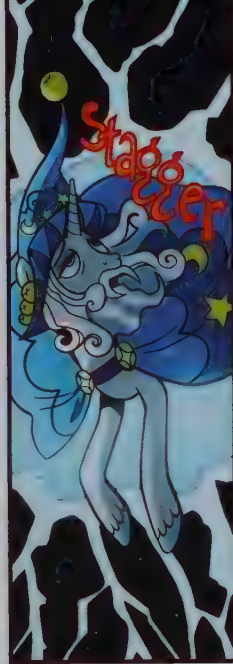
ALSO, IF NEEDED, RESCUE.

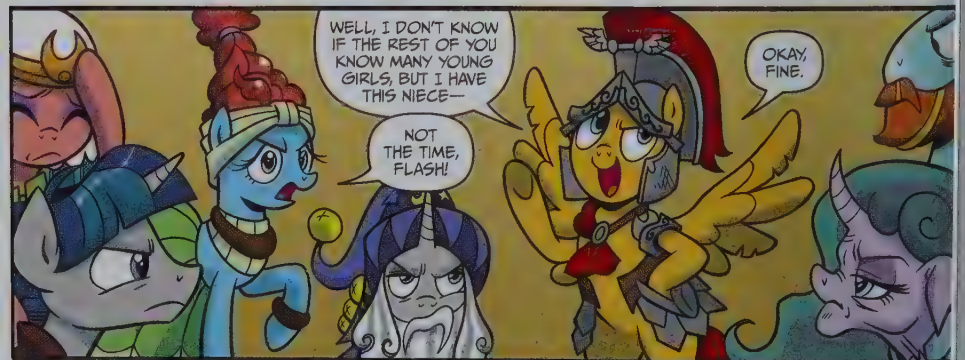
BUT YOU DEFINITELY WON'T NEED THAT. YOU'RE DOING GREAT.

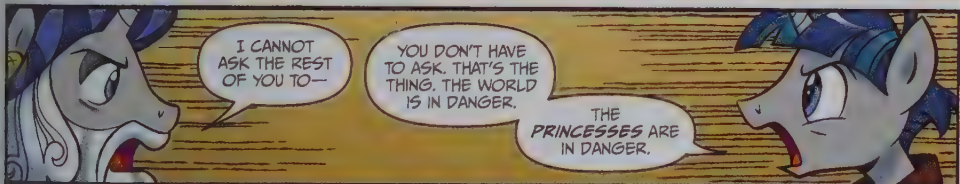


WHOA! WHAT'S THIS?!

BOOM!







CANTERLOT CASTLE.
LATER.

THIS IS THE
ROOM. WATCH
YOUR STEP THERE IS
A LOT OF BROKEN
GLASS.

THERE IS
ONLY ONE MIRROR
LEFT STANDING. THIS
MUST LEAD TO THE
WORLD TO WHICH THE
PRINCESSES WERE
TAKEN.

WHAT ARE WE
WAITING FOR!
LET'S—

DONK!

WELL,
THIS AIN'T TOO
DIGNIFIED. WHAT'S
GOIN ON?



THEY HAVE
DESTROYED THE
PORTAL FROM THE
OTHER SIDE. HOW
DID THEY KNOW
TO DO THAT?

PERHAPS
YOU'RE NOT THE
ONLY CLEVER ONE
IN THE WORLD,
STARSWIRL.



WHAT?
YOU WERE ALL
THINKING IT!

HE SAYS THESE
TWO PRINCESSES WIELD
UNIMAGINABLE POWER AND
HE EXPOSES THEM TO
UNTHINKABLE DANGER!
THEY DESERVED
BETTER!



DESERVE
BETTER. THEY
DESERVE BETTER.
THEY'RE STILL
OUT THERE.

AND THEY
NEED OUR
HELP, SO HOW
ARE WE GOING
TO HELP THEM,
STARSWIRL?



IT WAS MY SPELL THAT ENCHANTED THE MIRROR, BUT WITHOUT THE MIRROR IN PLACE I WILL HAVE TO USE A STANDARD PORTAL.

I KNOW THE CORRECT WORLD, BUT I CANNOT BE SURE THAT WE'LL ARRIVE ANYWHERE NEAR THE PLACE WHERE THE PRINCESSES WERE BROUGHT THROUGH.

THE PORTAL WILL ONLY REMAIN FOR A FIXED AMOUNT OF TIME. IF ANY OF US DO NOT MAKE IT BACK IN TIME, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE WE WILL BE ABLE TO CREATE A PORTAL IN THE SAME PLACE AGAIN.

THE PORTAL IS READY WHEN YOU ARE.

VROOO



I'LL TAKE THE LEAD. STYGIAN, COME WALK WITH ME.

UH, OKAY.



I WILL TAKE YOU TWO!

CAN WE REFER TO OURSELVES AS THE "MARE-FORCE"?

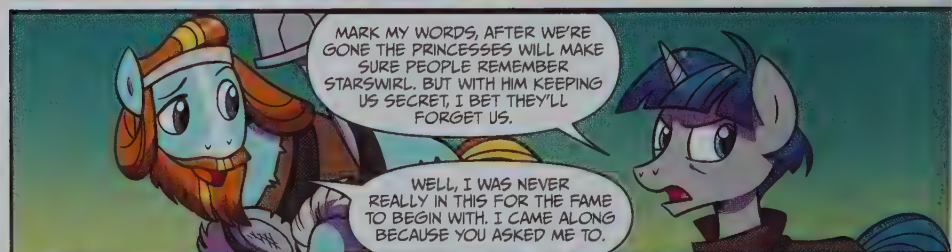
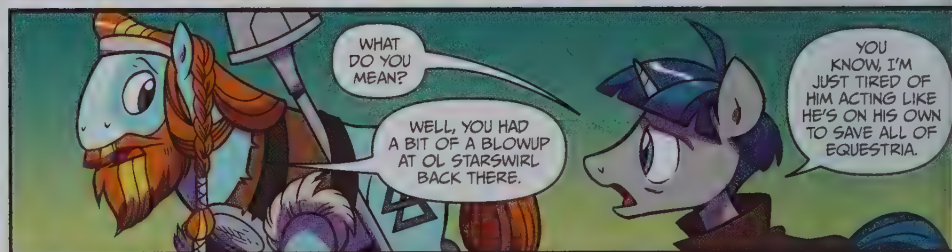
WHAT IS OUR POLICY ON SUB-TEAMS? STRIKE FORCES?



YOU SET THE PACE, OLD COLT. I WOULDN'T WANT TO LEAVE YOU BEHIND.

SO CONSIDERATE.





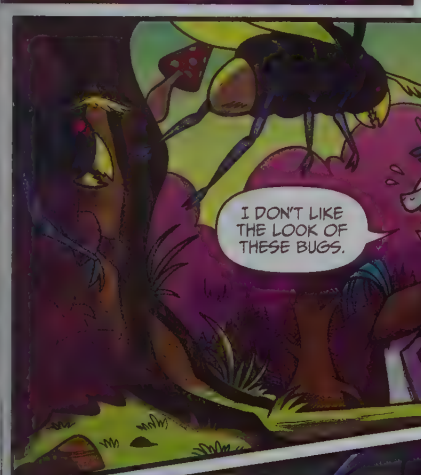






HEY, LIL BUDDY,
I'M NOT GREAT AT
MATH, BUT YOUR
COUNTING SEEMS
WRONG.

OH.



I DON'T LIKE
THE LOOK OF
THESE BUGS.



OH COME ON
NOW, LAD, THEY'RE
JUST BUGS, STEP
ASIDE.



LOOK HERE,
BUGGIES. MY
NAME'S ROCKHOOF
AND I DON'T WANT TO
HURT YOU, JUST TELL
US WHERE THE
PRINCESSES ARE AND
I WON'T HAVE TO
INTRODUCE YOU TO
MY BIG METAL FLY
SWATTER.

YOU KNOW
ABOUT METAL,
RIGHT?





ALLOW ME TO MAKE SURE I HAVE THIS RIGHT, WE ARE LOOKING FOR THE PATH OF THE PRINCESSES BUT WE HAVE NO IDEA WHERE THEY CAME IN OR HOW BIG THIS FOREST IS?

NO PROBLEM. I AM SURE WE CAN ACCOMPLISH THIS.

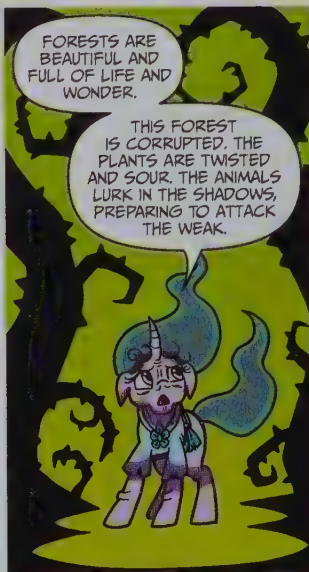
THAT SEEMS TO BE ABOUT THE SPEED OF IT.



I WISH I HAD YOUR CONFIDENCE, SOMNAMBULA.

MISTMANE, YOU'VE BEEN QUIET. WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

I HATE THIS PLACE.



FORESTS ARE BEAUTIFUL AND FULL OF LIFE AND WONDER.

THIS FOREST IS CORRUPTED. THE PLANTS ARE TWISTED AND SOUR. THE ANIMALS LURK IN THE SHADOWS, PREPARING TO ATTACK THE WEAK.

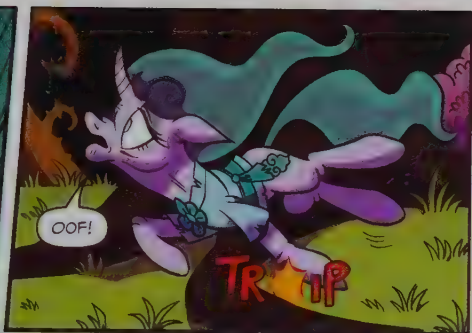


BUT THAT'S JUST HOW NATURE WORKS, RIGHT?

NOT LIKE THIS. ANIMALS HUNT OUT OF HUNGER. THESE CREATURES HERE ARE... ANGRY. THEY'RE TWISTED WITH AN UNNATURAL RAGE AND...



...THEY ARE HERE TO STOP US.











DO I
KNOW YOU?

PERHAPS
NOT, BUT I
KNOW YOU.



SO, YOU KNEW
THE VERSION OF
ME FROM THIS
WORLD?

YES, WE WERE
FRIENDS, UNTIL
HE TURNED
ON ME.

WHAT DID
YOU DO TO
HIM?

THE SAME
THING I AM
ABOUT TO DO
TO YOU.

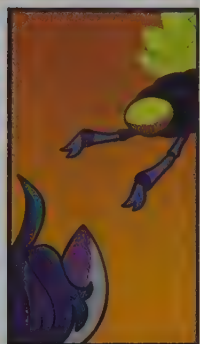


I
OBLITERATED
HIM!



YOU MAY
DEFEAT ME, BUT
NOT UNTIL I HAVE
RESCUED THOSE
GIRLS!

FUNNY, THAT'S
EXACTLY WHAT
THE OTHER ONE SAID
BEFORE I CRUSHED
HIM!





STOP!
LEAVE HIM
ALONE!



WELL NOW, THAT
SURE IS SOMETHING.
YOU THINK YOU COULD
GET THEM AWAY
FROM ME?

COME
TO ME!



HUH.

ROCKHOOF,
THEY'RE OBEYING
MY EVERY COMMAND.
WHY ARE THEY
DOING THAT?

YOU GOT
ME, LIL BUDDY.
BUT I'M GLAD
THEY ARE.



THIS
IS REALLY
CREEPY
BUT...

IF I CAN MAKE
THEM DO THAT, DO
YOU THINK I COULD
MAKE THEM HELP
US?



WELL, IT'S
WORTH A TRY.
WHAT'VE WE GOT
TO LOSE?

OKAY, BUGS,
TAKE ME TO THE
PRINCESSES.



FOLLOW
THEM!





THE BUGS
STOPPED.
WHERE TO
NOW?

I THINK
WE'RE
THERE.



I MIGHT BE ABLE
TO TAKE ONE OF THE
BIG GUYS, BUT I DON'T
THINK I CAN TAKE
BOTH.

THE OTHERS
SHOULD BE HERE
SOON. WE HAVE
TO WAIT FOR
THEM.

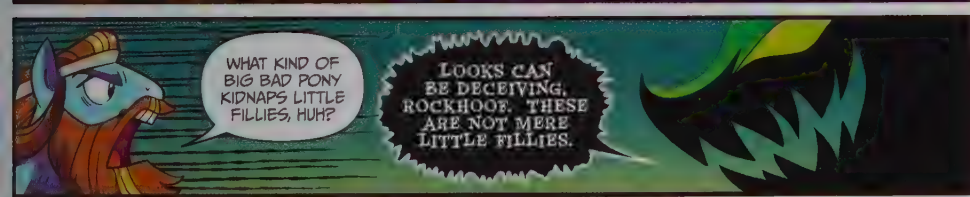
OR, YOU
COULD RUN
AWAY AND NEVER
RETURN.



STAY AWAY FROM
MY LITTLE PONIES.
I HAVE PLANS
FOR THEM.

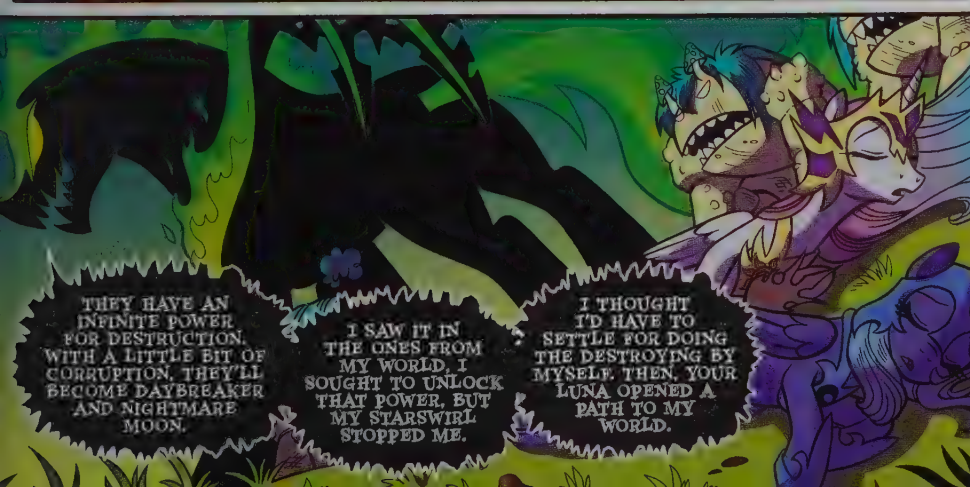
PLANS?

I GOTTA
ASK YOU A
QUESTION!



WHAT KIND OF
BIG BAD PONY
KIDNAPS LITTLE
FILLIES, HUH?

LOOKS CAN
BE DECEIVING.
ROCKHOOF. THESE
ARE NOT MERE
LITTLE FILLIES.



THEY HAVE AN
INFINITE POWER
FOR DESTRUCTION.
WITH A LITTLE BIT OF
CORRUPTION, THEY'LL
BECOME DAYBREAKER
AND NIGHTMARE
MOON.

I SAW IT IN
THE ONES FROM
MY WORLD. I
SOUGHT TO UNLOCK
THAT POWER, BUT
MY STARSWIRL
STOPPED ME.

I THOUGHT
I'D HAVE TO
SETTLE FOR DOING
THE DESTROYING BY
MYSELF. THEN, YOUR
LUNA OPENED A
PATH TO MY
WORLD.

ALL I HAD TO DO WAS SEND OUT MY SCOUTS TO WAIT UNTIL THEY MADE THEMSELVES VISIBLE AGAIN.

THEN I CAPTURED THEM, AND ONCE I HAVE INFUSED THEM WITH SHADOW MAGIC, I SHALL COMMAND THE TWO MOST DESTRUCTIVE FORCES IN HISTORY.

THEN, I'LL OVERRUN EVERY REALITY AND MAKE IT AS EMPTY AND CORRUPTED AS MINE.

NOT WHILE I'M STILL STANDING.

ROCKHOOF, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I MISS. UNFORTUNATELY, MY ROCKHOOF HAD TO HAVE AN ACCIDENT AT THE VOLCANO.

WHO ARE YOU?

THE QUESTION IS, WHO IS THIS ONE? I DON'T RECOGNIZE HIM.

NEVER YOU MIND.

NO MATTER, I'LL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO GET THE ANSWERS OUT AFTER I'VE DESTROYED YOU.

DON'T COUNT ON IT!

YOU'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE REST OF US FIRST.



AH, IT'S
JUST LIKE
OLD TIMES.
EVERYPONY
IS HERE.

BUT
THIS TIME,
I'M MUCH
STRONGER.

AND I HAVE
AN ARMY OF
MY OWN.

DESTROY
THESE
MEDDLESOME
PONIES!



IT'S GOOD
OF Y'ALL TO
MAKE IT.

SORRY IT WAS
A BEAR GETTING
HERE.

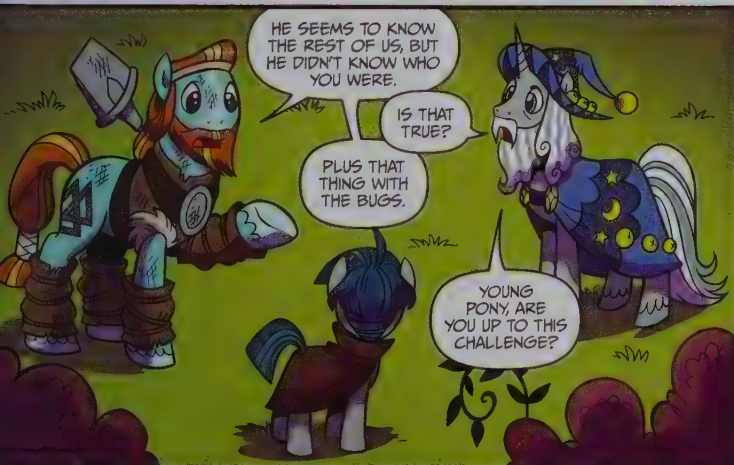
HA! A BEAR!
I GET IT!



I NEED TO GET
TO THE PRINCESSES.
YOU ALL NEED TO
COVER—

HANG ON THERE,
BEARDO. I WANNA
HEAR WHAT STYGIAN
HAS TO SAY.

ME?



HE SEEMS TO KNOW
THE REST OF US, BUT
HE DIDN'T KNOW WHO
YOU WERE.

IS THAT
TRUE?

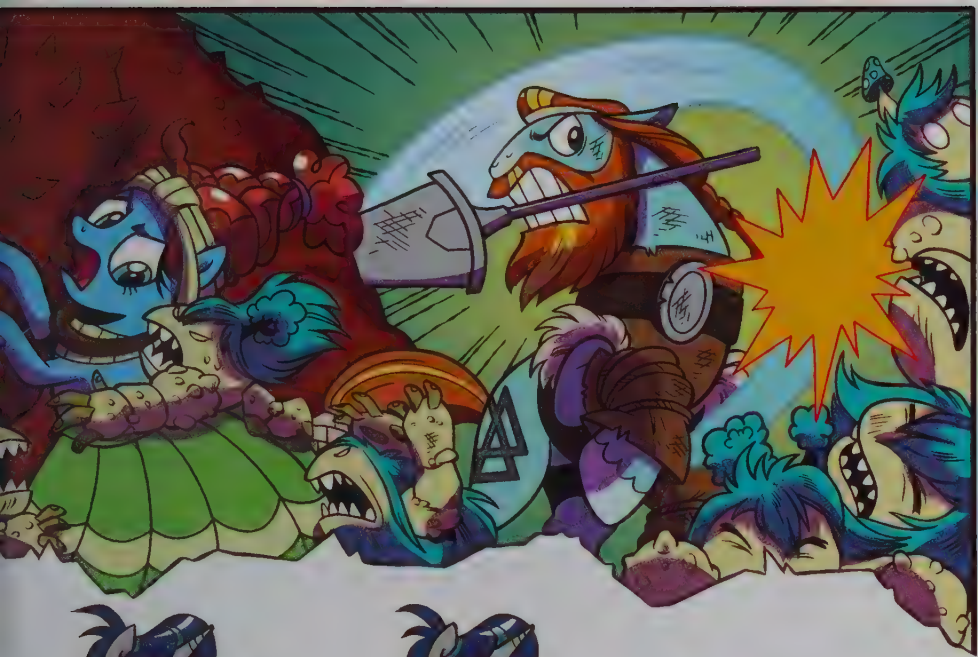
PLUS THAT
THING WITH
THE BUGS.

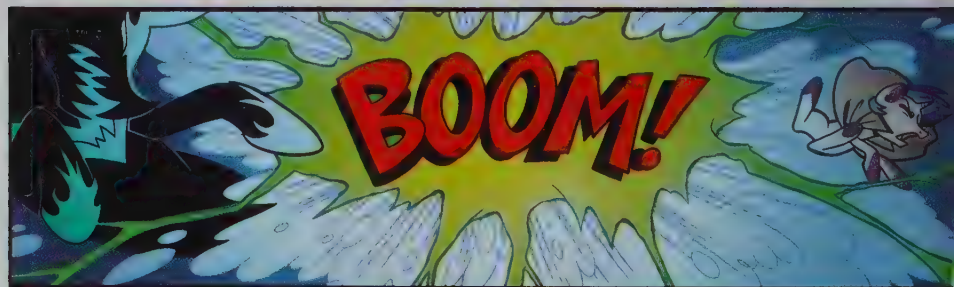
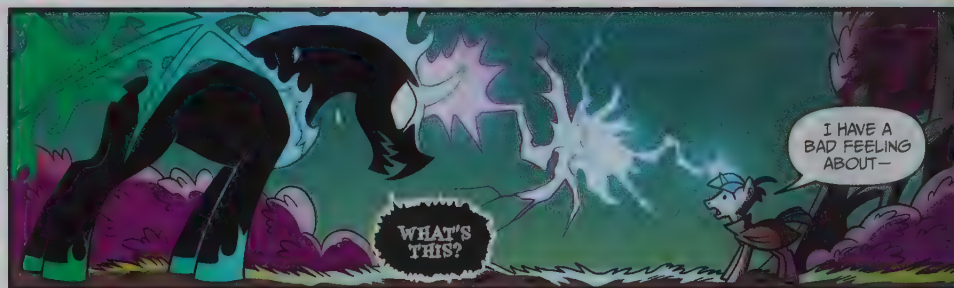
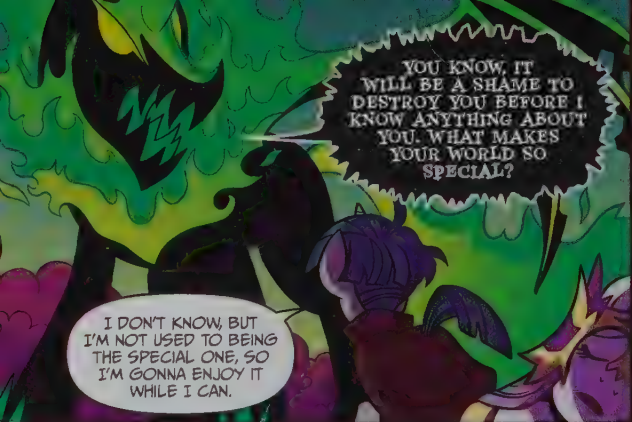
YOUNG
PONY, ARE
YOU UP TO THIS
CHALLENGE?



I'LL GET
THEM.



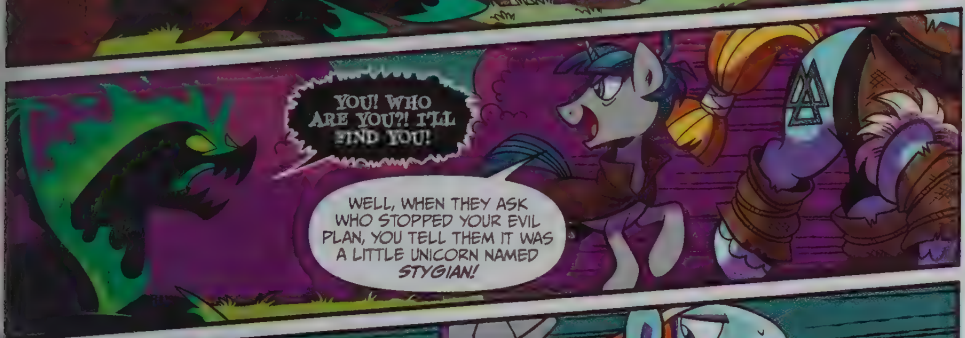






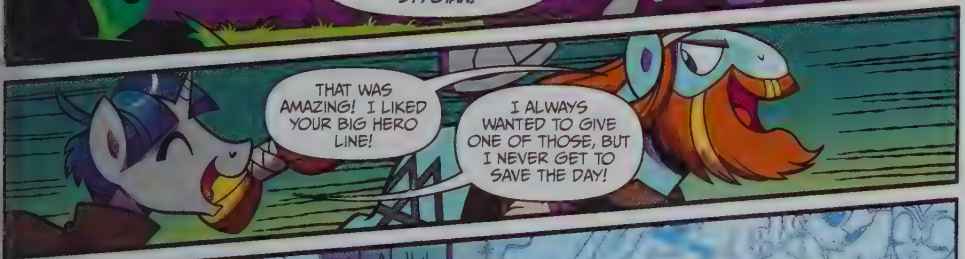
NO! YOU FOOL!

I HAVE THEM! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!



YOU! WHO ARE YOU? I'LL FIND YOU!

WELL, WHEN THEY ASK WHO STOPPED YOUR EVIL PLAN, YOU TELL THEM IT WAS A LITTLE UNICORN NAMED *STYGIAN*!



THAT WAS AMAZING! I LIKED YOUR BIG HERO LINE!

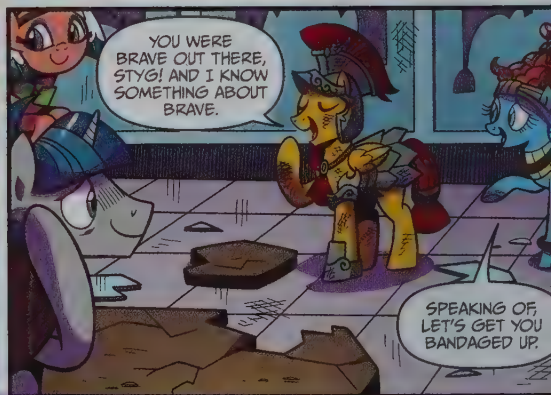
I ALWAYS WANTED TO GIVE ONE OF THOSE, BUT I NEVER GET TO SAVE THE DAY!



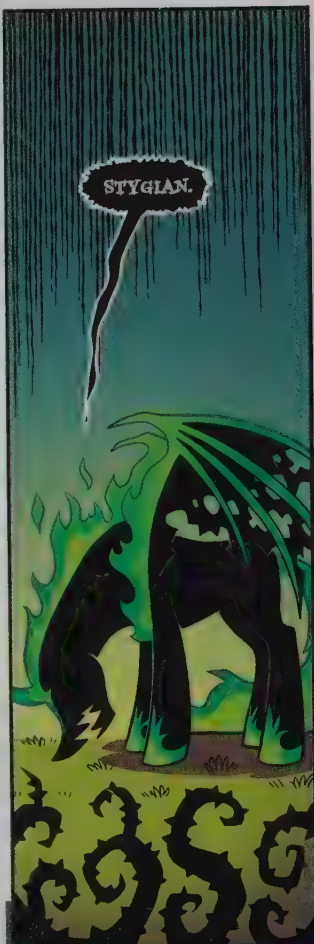
WELL, I'VE GOT A FEELING THIS WON'T BE THE LAST TIME.

I'D DO ANYTHING TO DO IT AGAIN!

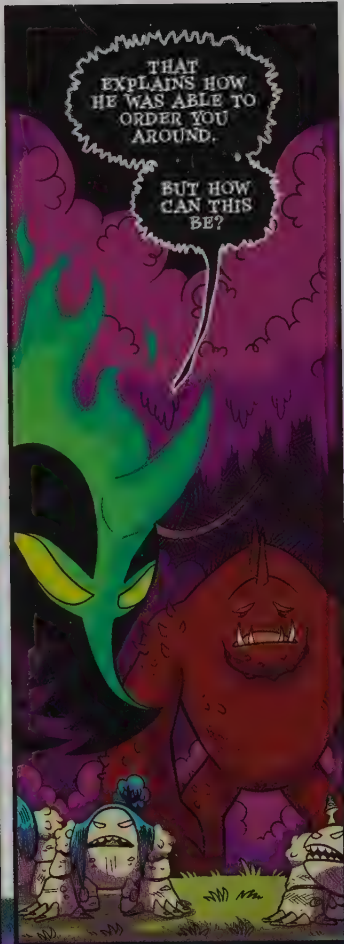
ZWWW! PPP!







STYGIAN.



THAT
EXPLAINS HOW
HE WAS ABLE TO
ORDER YOU
AROUND.

BUT HOW
CAN THIS
BE?



HAS IT
BEEN SO
LONG?

HAVE I
CHANGED SO
MUCH?



I DIDN'T EVEN
RECOGNIZE
MYSELF.

The End

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